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2006 PREVIEW

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(PAGE 96)

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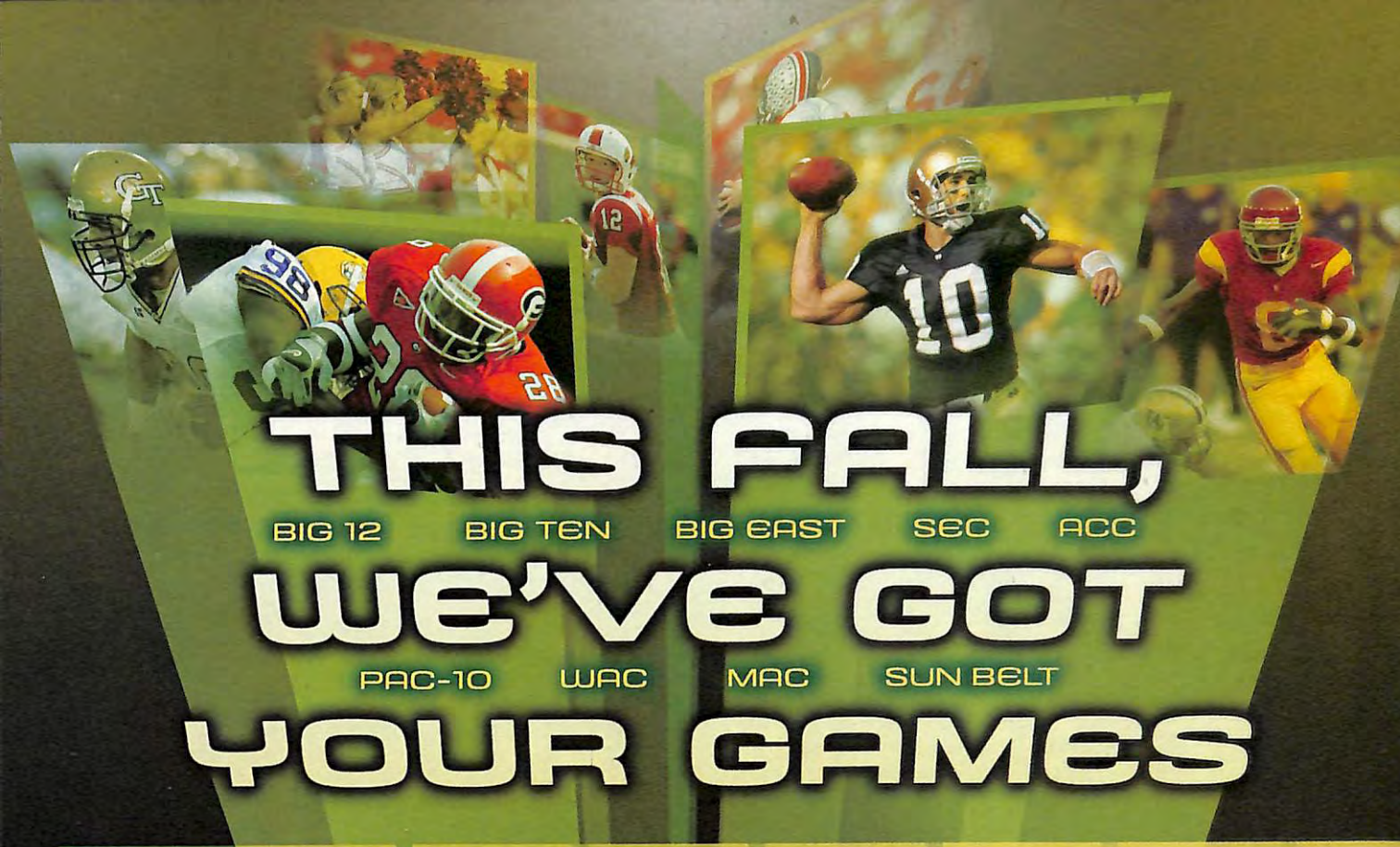
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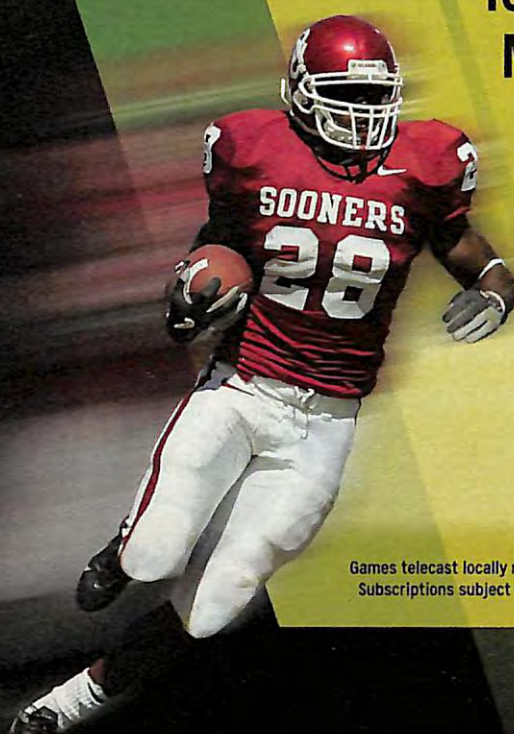
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Letter from the Publisher

This year marks the 25th year of *Lindy's* producing college football annuals. Our first year in business was 1982 — we published *Lindy's* SEC football. It was legendary coach Paul Bear Bryant's last year of coaching. Another legend — Herschel Walker — won the Heisman.

Five years later in 1987, *Lindy's* published new regionals for the ACC, Big Ten, Pac-10, Southwest and Big 8 conferences. The Big 8 and Southwest conferences later merged and so did *Lindy's* two issues.

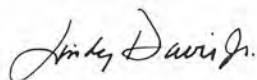
2006 marks the 25th anniversary of *Lindy's* Southeastern magazine and the 20th anniversary of the other regionals. In all of our issues, we take a look back and bring you the highlights of the past 20/25 years. I think you will find it very entertaining and nostalgic.

Lindy's added our national college issue in 1998. We have a riveting feature on the LSU football team in this issue in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that I think you will enjoy.

It's been a great 25 years for *Lindy's*. Thanks for letting us share our love and passion for college football with you.

I hope you have enjoyed the issues as much as we have enjoyed bringing them to you.

Sincerely,



Lindy Davis
Publisher

P.S. Be sure and check out our new and enhanced website. I think you will like the changes we have made. Ben Cook is our editor and is doing a great job.

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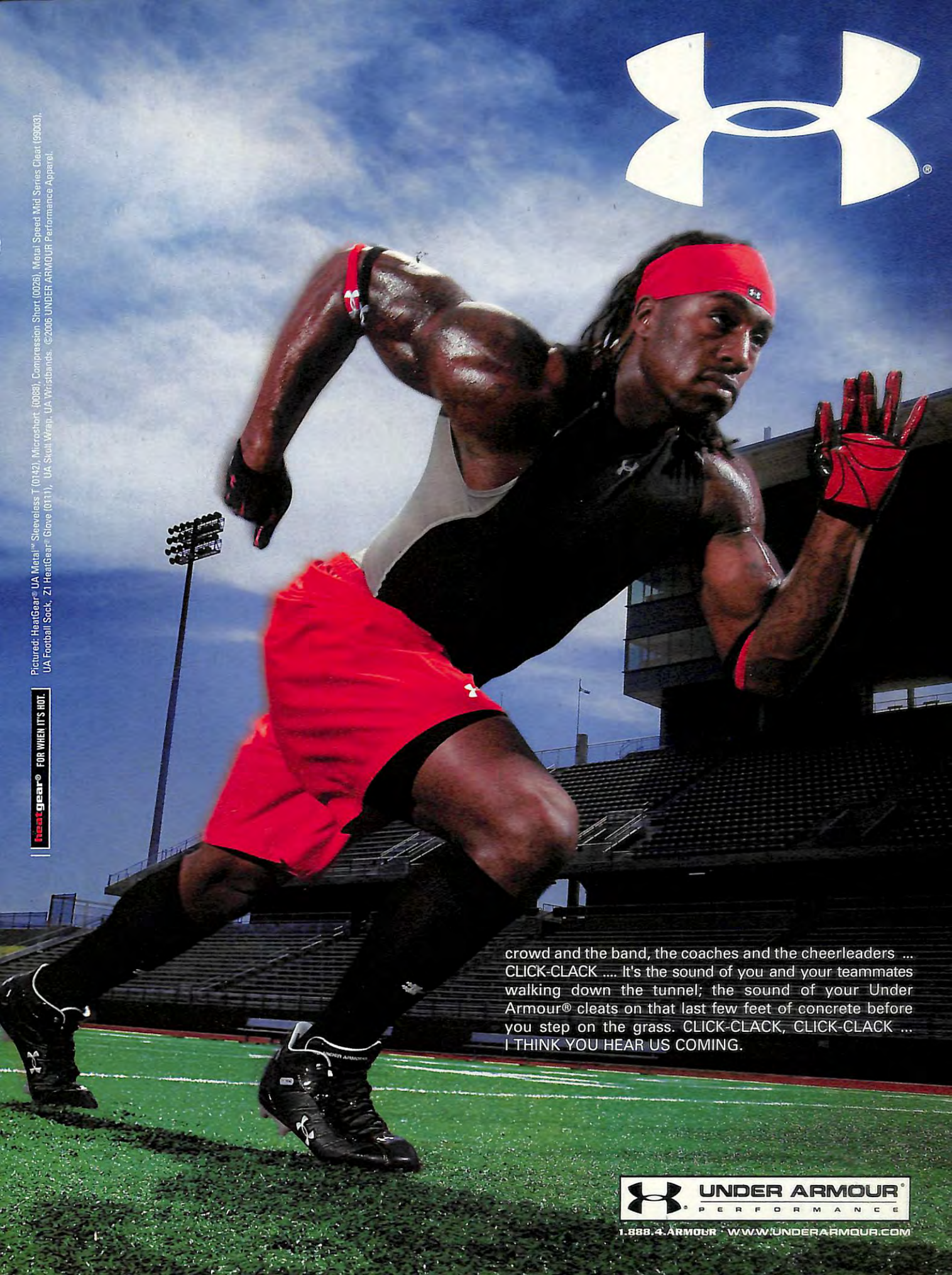
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NATIONAL PICKS

Sez here that Irish are back where they 'belong'



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1. NOTRE DAME



The "gone is the glory" talk of 2004 gave way to an entirely different spin in 2005: Notre Dame isn't out-of-touch with modern college football, its academic standards aren't too high, and you can recruit the best athletes to South Bend.

All the Irish needed was the right coach.

That Charlie Weis has already beaten USC for the plum of the 2007 recruiting class — QB Jimmy Clausen (from Southern California!) — is getting ahead of the game, but not beside the point.

Notre Dame's 9-3 record in its first season under Crewcut Charlie gave notice that the Irish were back, and recruiting efforts suggest that Notre Dame is back ... for good.

With 16 returning starters, including the nation's best quarterback in Brady Quinn and an offense that should improve on its gaudy 477.3-yard average last season, the Irish will leave no doubt.

They're back on top.

THE GOOD NEWS: Tyrone Willingham won't get a statue outside of Notre Dame Stadium, but give the man his due for bringing in the backbone — dare we say, heart and soul — of this championship-

caliber team. In one swoop, the glorious Class of 2003 included Brady Quinn, Jeff Samardzija, Tom Zbikowski, Victor Abiamiri, Ryan Harris, Trevor Laws, John Sullivan, Ambrose Wooden ...

Now, picture that kind of senior class multiplied by four. That's the kind of team the Irish are going to have every year if Weis stays true to his word and stays in South Bend (commence rosaries).

THE BAD NEWS: Notre Dame better grab its track shoes, because USC is still upset about the speed-killing knee-length grass (OK, so we exaggerate) at Notre Dame Stadium last season. Can the Irish handle teams with speed on a fast track? The lasting images of the Fiesta Bowl loss to Ohio State indicate they can't.

Speaking of which, the Buckeyes, we say, will be waiting again for the Irish at the end of the road — in the national title game. But if improvements aren't made to the Notre Dame defense (nearly 400 yards allowed per game last season), the Irish aren't going to get there.

OUR CALL: Despite the defensive questions, these skies are not blue-gray skies, but sunny days. The schedule is demanding, with Yellow Jackets, Nittany Lions, Wolverines, Spartans, Bruins and, ultimately, Trojans, but if you're good enough, you're good enough. Notre Dame is that.



2. OHIO STATE

Rematch in the desert would be fine with Bucks

QB Troy Smith is the spittin' image of this year's Vince Young. The memories of him picking apart Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl suggest that we might have our 1-2 picks backward. That early September visit to Texas looms on the horizon through the summer, but even if the Bucks lose that one, they'll still be in position to win the Big Ten and challenge for the national title.

THE GOOD NEWS: Watch for top recruit tailback Chris Wells, who enrolled in January. He is built like one of the pillars at Ohio Stadium. Wells is a combination of speed and smash — the new Eddie George. (And starting RB Antonio Pittman is pretty good, too.)

THE BAD NEWS: The defense needs nine new starters. But this is a top-tier Big Ten program. Somehow Jim Tressel will get it done. The front seven will be fine, with Indiana transfer LB John Kerr finally ready to contribute and JC transfer LB Larry Grant making a mark.

OUR CALL: This offense, with Smith and Ted Ginn Jr. as Heisman candidates, is arguably better than the 2002 group that won the Fiesta Bowl and national title. The defense doesn't have to be great.



3. WEST VIRGINIA

Ingredients in place for Fiesta-style feast

Beating Georgia in last season's Sugar Bowl gave the program the legitimacy it needed from others around the country, and now here's a recipe for a true national championship contender: 1) The 'Eers have talent. 2) They will start in or near the top five. 3) They have a manageable Big East schedule. 4) Just add water and let it cook in the desert heat.

THE GOOD NEWS: Rich Rodriguez has been able to mold the Spread option into a power running attack. Both quarterback Patrick White and tailback Steve Slaton are a threat to surpass 1,000 rushing yards this season. And they are only sophomores.

THE BAD NEWS: Rodriguez has allowed the world — namely every college coach who asked — to come to his doorstep in the offseason to learn his version of the Spread. Will familiarity breed upsets? The toughest game on the schedule — Louisville — is on the road.

OUR CALL: We've been here before. West Virginia was hyped in 2004 with Chris Henry and Pac-Man Jones, and then coughed up an 8-4 hairball. But, really, there is no reason for fewer than 10 wins — or 11, or 12.



4. TEXAS

It wouldn't be fair if VY was still here

That 800-pound gorilla has left Austin. Mack Brown has spent the offseason gathering more hardware and recruits. When the Horns kick off, Brown will be just about done recruiting — for 2007. Those February victories have finally paid off in October (that would be at the Texas State Fair) and in January ... and that could very well continue. Beat Ohio State again, and we could be coloring that crystal football orange again.

THE GOOD NEWS: It's not at all difficult to envision this team defending its title (yes, national, as well as Big 12). Sure, VY is gone, but quarterbacks Jevan Snead and/or Colt McCoy just have to manage the game. The rest of the offense is absolutely loaded.

THE BAD NEWS: We can't blame Young for leaving early to the NFL after all he did for the program, but still, it does make things a little different in the huddle. And there's no difference-making TE David Thomas or record-setting PK David Pino (113 points in '05) anymore.

OUR CALL: The offense goes more conventional. The defense might be better. Texas will start and finish in the Top 10. The only question is, will it be closer to No. 10 or No. 1?



5. FLORIDA

Expectations are high at this hoops school

What in the name of Steve Spurrier is going on here? The Gators haven't even been to the SEC Championship Game since 2000, which underscores some of the giddiness in Gainesville because this ... could ... be ... the ... year. Urban Meyer's teams at Bowling Green and Utah took off in a big way in his second season, and Gator fans expect some of that action. They expect it all. And they expect it now. Just like hoops.

THE GOOD NEWS: Chris Leak threw for 2,639 yards, 20 TDs and completed 62.8 percent of his passes. And that was in a down year. He'll have targets aplenty with Dallas Baker, Andre Caldwell coming back from injury and freshman Percy Harvin arriving.

THE BAD NEWS: Meyer still was muttering about the running game in the spring — was the suggestion of playing without a tailback merely an idle threat? D-line should be strong, but fingers are crossed about shaky depth at linebacker and in the secondary.

OUR CALL: A fabulous recruiting class tells us that the right people are buying into Meyer's system. If he doesn't get that SEC title this season, one should be right around the corner.



6. USC

No expiration date on Trojans' excellence

Get 'em while you can, right? The Trojans are going through a transition that resembles the Miami power drain of 2003 and 2004, when the 'Canes had nine first-round picks in two years. But what exactly do you think Pete Carroll has been doing? Putting together three consecutive No. 1 recruiting classes is what, chock-full of more first-round picks. His latest offseason haul will be seen immediately on offense ... and away they go.

THE GOOD NEWS: USC is ridiculously deep at LB and even tinkered with a 3-4 look in the spring. At least a half-dozen All-America candidates are scattered through the roster. At QB, Carroll must choose between two former No. 1 prospects. Geez ... tough life.

THE BAD NEWS: You know about who isn't throwing the ball and who isn't running the ball. So, without Leinart/Bush/White, who will save the day in a schedule that includes non-conference games at Arkansas, vs. Nebraska and vs. Notre Dame?

OUR CALL: Jan. 4, 2006, wasn't the expiration date of USC's run of excellence. The Trojans won't be as immensely entertaining, but neither will they take a major step backward, thanks to a much-improved defense.



7. OKLAHOMA

Don't forget about Sooners

Most of last year's troubles have been squared away. The Sooners got better as the season went along and capped a rebuilding season with an encouraging win over Oregon in the Holiday Bowl. While Texas has stolen away the national title, national limelight, and even Big 12 South dominance, these guys aren't going to go softly into the night; the Sooners still have won five of the past six meetings.

THE GOOD NEWS: Adrian Peterson is healthy. Get ready for 1,500-yard season — at least — before he skips to the NFL. The defense is back to Stoops-like levels. Linebacker Rufus Alexander to trying to capture the school's third Butkus Award this decade.

THE BAD NEWS: That offensive line has to be rebuilt — again. Four starters from the Holiday Bowl are gone. And so is offensive coordinator Chuck Long (to become San Diego State's head coach). Those losses, particularly the line, could be the difference between 8-4 and 11-1.

OUR CALL: Oklahoma goes into the Texas game a pick 'em — which means the Big 12 and national titles will be at stake. With a healthy Peterson, all things are possible.



8. AUBURN

Are expectations Tigers' biggest obstacle?

Since a bungled overthrow of coach Tommy Tuberville late in the 2003 season, the Tigers have an SEC-high 22 victories, winning 16 of 17 conference games, including a league title. How do you like him now? There's no regress in this Tigers team, with no personnel losses too big to overcome, even a 300-pound one like OT Marcus McNeill. On the other hand, high expectations have crushed Auburn before.

THE GOOD NEWS: RB Kenny Irons plays his best in the biggest games, averaging 167.7 yards last season against LSU, Georgia and Alabama, all top 10 teams. Brandon Cox is just fine at QB, and there's not a palpable weakness anywhere to be found.

THE BAD NEWS: Moderate area of concerns: OT, DT, depth at WR beyond Courtney Taylor. The schedule is as cake as an SEC slate can be, but there's no open date, so it will be a grind. But did we mention high expectations? Yikes!

OUR CALL: The Tigers, with eight home games, play only three out-of-state contests, never having to leave the region. If all goes well (and it could), they face a long plane ride out to Arizona for the national title game.



9. CALIFORNIA

'Ted Heads' primed to topple Trojan horse

The Bears aren't reinventing their offense — they have averaged 34.4 points in coach Jeff Tedford's four seasons — but simply adding some Spread elements to it, courtesy of former Northwestern assistant Mike Dunbar. Brilliant! Tedford remains the most credible threat to USC's league dominance, and he doesn't even need another first-round pick at quarterback this season. Merely ordinary QB play from maybe a longshoreman ... or at least a Nate Longshore or Joe Ayoub.

THE GOOD NEWS: Blare it with a trumpet: RB Marshawn Lynch is going to have a monster season, excelling in a run-catch role in the new offense. Pretty much everything else is set, with talented WRs, studly LBs, shut-down corners and DT Brandon Mebane.

THE BAD NEWS: The safety position needs to be upgraded to match the rest of the defense ... but that's nitpicking. Getting the Pac-10 title probably requires a win at the L.A. Coliseum, and that's a high standard. Opening at Tennessee will be tricky, too.

OUR CALL: Unlike the 2004 season, Cal should not be denied an at-large BCS berth. Berkeley "Ted Heads" have reason to target the league's automatic bid. The Bears could be that good.



10. LSU

Resilience counts for a lot ... and so does talent

Given the backdrop of death, destruction and displaced lives, LSU's 2005 season meant nothing ... and everything. In one of those put-sports-in-context moments, the post-Katrina Tigers gave physical comfort when they could and then spread good cheer with a stirring 11-2 season, capped by an SEC Championship Game appearance and a 40-3 smashing of Miami in the Peach Bowl. With talent galore and a renewed chance to concentrate on their tasks on the field, LSU is back for more.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Tigers have a wealth of skill at QB, needing only to find the right rotation (or none at all). DBs LaRon Landry and Jessie Daniels are veterans who don't have much trouble against SEC passers. And you won't find a more resilient team.

THE BAD NEWS: No team immediately finds replacements for all-star DTs such as Kyle Williams and Claude Wroten. RB Alley Broussard is no sure thing coming back from injury, but he's a few months ahead of RB Justin Vincent, also rehabbing an ACL.

OUR CALL: It will take more than games at Auburn, Florida, Tennessee and Arkansas to intimidate these guys. That said, the SEC's most talented team does get downgraded a bit because of the schedule.



11. MICHIGAN

It's bounce-back time ... or at least it better be

That construction at the Big House is a metaphor for the program. Coming off the school's worst record since 1984 (7-5), it would help if Lloyd Carr and the Wolverines would bounce back strong ... and winning the Big Ten in '06 would be just the thing. New coordinators on both sides of the ball need to translate the staff moves from "shake up" to "improvement."

THE GOOD NEWS: Juniors Michael Hart and Chad Henne seem like grizzled veterans. After a fantastic debut in '04, they slid back a bit in '05. The new star on the horizon is WR Mario Manningham. He's the guy who beat Penn State in the final seconds.

THE BAD NEWS: What is this team's identity? It gave up 32 points to Nebraska in the bowl game, lost to Ohio State at home, but handed Penn State its only loss. Is this the slow decline and fall of Carr, or was last season just a bump in the road?

OUR CALL: Michigan must reassert itself in a typically strong Big Ten. As usual, the schedule is tough. These Wolverines are going to have to do something special to overcome Ohio State at the top of the league.



12. FLORIDA STATE

Pressure is on Seminole offense to produce

There isn't a defending conference champion with more question marks. Quarterback, offensive line, running game? Take your pick. Good thing the rest of the ACC coaches have similar problems to solve. How balanced is the league? FSU's 8-5 mark last season was the worst record of any I-A conference champion other than Arkansas State. Chances are, it'll take something better than that this year ... and something way better to contend nationally.

THE GOOD NEWS: True freshman defensive back Myron Rolle blew into town a semester early and blew the Seminoles away. The school's great d-back tradition should be enhanced by this playmaker. Here's thinking QB Drew Weatherford comes into his own.

THE BAD NEWS: The defense lost four high picks to the NFL draft, but there's more pressure than ever on Jeff Bowden to improve the offense that had the seventh-worst running game in the nation. Offensive line, get tougher.

OUR CALL: A loss in the opener would be Florida State's sixth loss inside of 11 months — officially qualifying as a habit. There's no guarantee the 'Noles will be better, but they're good enough to take the ACC.



13. LOUISVILLE

Avoid a hiccup, and these Cards might deal

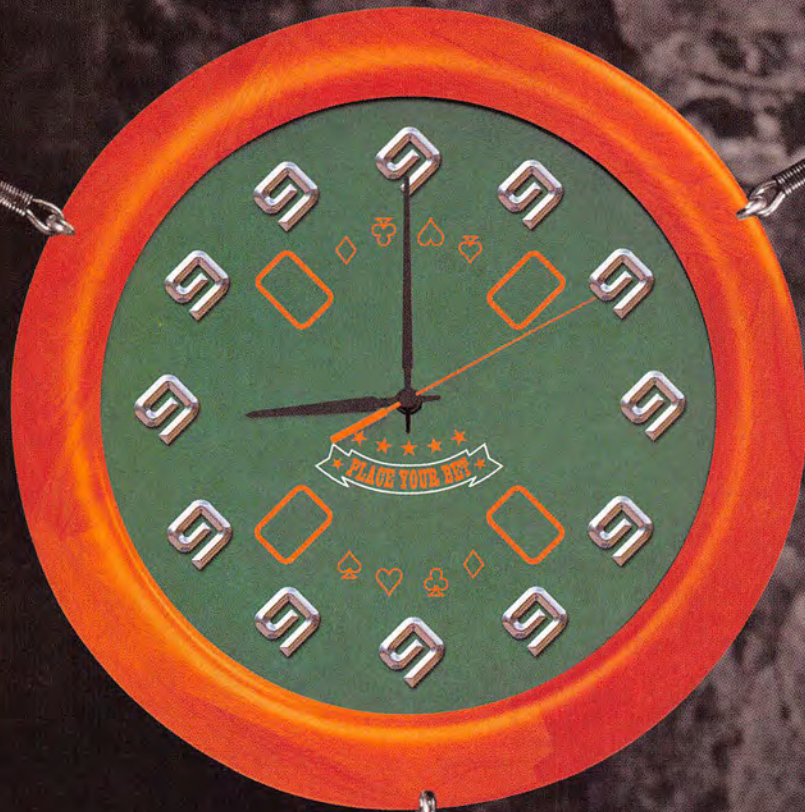
Bobby Petrino keeps flirting with other jobs and keeps coming back to Louisville. He turned down three different bids from the Oakland Raiders in the offseason. He's got a great thing going where he is. Now in a big-time conference, the 'Ville can make a legitimate run at the table with all the chips ... this year it's in Glendale, Ariz.

THE GOOD NEWS: Quarterback Brian Brohm's knee has rehabbed remarkably quickly, and he is expected to be 100 percent for the season. TB Michael Bush ignored the NFL, which means Louisville gets back the fastest 250-pound tailback in the country.

THE BAD NEWS: Petrino had the national Defensive Player of the Year in Elvis Dumervil ... and the defense still struggled at times. The D has plenty of talent but can't afford a hiccup like the one it experienced last year at South Florida (a 45-14 defeat).

OUR CALL: Louisville has averaged 53 points per home game in the past two seasons. The schedule displays a chance for a special run: The Cards play only four bowl teams, and their two biggest foes (Miami and West Virginia) will be the visitors.

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14. GEORGIA

Can Dawgs make it a fifth Top 10 in a row?

The Dawgs have four consecutive Top 10 AP finishes (only USC can also make that claim) and still have plenty left in the tank. The thing that likely will bite them this time, though, is that they don't have David Greene or D.J. Shockley at quarterback. There might be a whole lot of neck straining to see when freshman Matthew Stafford is ready, but a somewhat benign early schedule allows time to figure it out.

THE GOOD NEWS: To get to 8-0 before the Florida game, the Bulldogs basically need to take care of their home games and get a win at South Carolina in Week 2. Lots of RBs will keep the chains moving, and the defensive front seven ranks with the SEC's best.

THE BAD NEWS: Fifth-year senior QB Joe Tereshinski, while gutty, isn't in the same class as his predecessors. The RBs are good; are any great? O-line replaces three starters. Secondary is three-fourths new. Loss of 13 position starters simply might be too great.

OUR CALL: The convergence of Florida's improvement and Georgia's slight step back is enough to transfer power in the SEC East, if only for a season. Another New Year's Day bowl should help ease the pain.



15. UTAH

Shades of 2004 and a perfect run

Neither Boise State nor Fresno State in the WAC appear to be Top 25 timber. The MAC doesn't have an ace team. Conference USA could be led by (yawn) Tulsa. That leaves Utah to be this season's designated BCS buster, made more possible by the addition of two more at-large teams to the big-bowl mix. If a "mid-major" finishes 12th or better in the BCS standings, they get an automatic bid. Could even a one-loss Utah team make the cut?

THE GOOD NEWS: The quarterback position is talented and deep, including 2005 starter Brian Johnson, expected to be ready this summer after ACL surgery. Combo DB Eric Weddle goes for another MWC Defensive Player of the Year award.

THE BAD NEWS: The offense needs to find a running back, and in a hurry, with the season opening at UCLA. In addition to that, there is a tricky scheduling two-step with a home game against Boise State on Sept. 30, followed by a Thursday meeting with TCU (who's idea was that?).

OUR CALL: Fifteen starters return from a 7-5 team that pummeled Georgia Tech in a bowl, and enough players are left who recall the undefeated mojo of 2004. The Utes are on the verge of becoming BCS regulars.



16. MIAMI

Will staff shakeup jumpstart Canes?

Everything seemed to be cooking after a huge win at Virginia Tech in November, and then the Canes went 2-2 in their final four games. Larry Coker turned over half the coaching staff after a disappointing loss to LSU in the Peach Bowl. Was that the problem? Will this prove to be the right move? Was it enough? If not, Coker will find himself on an even hotter seat.

THE GOOD NEWS: This defense could be as good as any in Coral Gables in a long time. It held Kirby Freeman and Kyle Wright to 77 total passing yards in the spring game. Still, it's a unit that seemed to stop playing as it gave up 40 points to LSU.

THE BAD NEWS: In many ways, Wright is still a work in progress. That's not good news when there seems to be a dearth of playmaking receivers. At first glance, there is no difference-making tailback on the roster, but Tyrone Moss is trying to make it back from knee problems.

OUR CALL: Another 9-3 season won't be enough. Double-digit victories are expected — and 14 games overall might be the key factor: That means at least a division title.



17. TCU

BCS busters? Frogs might fit the bill

Somebody has to keep the national championship trophy in the state, and if it's not the hook-'em-Horns people, it just might be the Horned Frogs. A stretch? Sure, but it's not a leap to think that a team with a 10-game winning streak that returns four first-team All-Mountain West performers can run the table, or at least get into the top 12 in the BCS rankings to get into a BCS bowl. This shouldn't be a shock: TCU is 43-18 in Gary Patterson's five seasons as head coach.

THE GOOD NEWS: The defensive line returns two all-conference ends in juniors Tommy Blake and Chase Ortiz. The offense is excellent, but defense is the calling card, with 26 interceptions and 40 turnovers last season, both national bests.

THE BAD NEWS: Four starters are gone from the offensive line (all-star tackle Herb Taylor is back, however), so clearing holes for a three-headed monster at tailback is the main concern. And, hey, it's hard to forget that these guys lost to SMU last year.

OUR CALL: The toughest games come in the first month — Texas Tech and BYU at home, then at Utah — and if the Frogs survive, they'll be building toward a BCS-busting finish.



18. CLEMSON

Win close ones, and Tigers could win big one

The Tigers just have to be a little better to produce results that are a whole lot better. Of their four losses last season, two were in overtime, one was by a point and the other was by four. As it was, Clemson won six of its final seven with an intimidating defense and a balanced offense. QB Charlie Whitehurst is gone, but fifth-year senior Will Proctor (talk about patience) finally gets his chance, and his athleticism is a better fit, anyway.

THE GOOD NEWS: The defense allowed 10 or fewer points in five of the last seven games, and seven starters are back, including star-quality DE Gaines Adams and LB Anthony Waters. The offensive line, returning intact, is one of the best in the nation.

THE BAD NEWS: Early games at Boston College and Florida State could knock the wind out of the season by mid-September. A little more offensive pop is necessary for the Tigers to avoid upset losses, as in recent years (to Duke and twice to Wake Forest).

OUR CALL: Getting nine wins should be the minimum standard, and that's conceding games at BC, FSU and Virginia Tech. Win a couple of those, and Clemson might just walk away with the title and its first BCS bid.



19. ARIZONA STATE

Can Transfer Tech get the defense it needs?

Sam or Rudy? Keller or Carpenter? Says coach Dirk Koetter, "We wish we had this problem at every position." What he has are two QBs who could be first-team All-Pac-10. The job (for now) goes to Keller, the senior who had 20 touchdowns in eight games before a thumb injury. Carpenter, a sophomore, came in and led the nation in passing efficiency. Know this: the offense will fly.

THE GOOD NEWS: A young receiving corps is boosted by the move of Rudy Burgess from tailback, clearing the way for Keegan Her-ring to be a 1,000-yard rusher. D-line could (finally) be nasty if a trio of transfers from four-year schools lives up to billing.

THE BAD NEWS: The linebacker unit needs patching together. A new nine-game conference schedule means the Devils open at Cal, a school they were supposed to miss. Koetter, whose team also plays at USC, is 0-10 in Pac-10 games in California.

OUR CALL: Put it this way: This season had better be something along the lines of 10-wins special because Koetter hasn't wowed the fan base. He's 32-28 in five years, 17-23 in conference games.

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20. VIRGINIA TECH

Bad losses need to be quickly forgotten

Frank Beamer's Hokies were on the cusp of becoming the dominant ACC program until a bad November loss to Miami. And that was followed by a surprising loss to Florida State in the ACC championship game. That doesn't mean they're falling off the Earth, but the Hokies did lose their two biggest games of the season, and the rest of the league isn't going away, even though talented/troubled QB Marcus Vick has.

THE GOOD NEWS: What's wrong with being a pocket passer? Sean Glennon isn't embarrassing himself or the program, so the departure of Vick might be addition by subtraction. A deep corps of receivers, and oodles of candidates at running back, makes the transition easier.

THE BAD NEWS: Virginia Tech, No. 1 in total defense in '05, loses a bevy of stars (DE Jimmy Williams and DE Darryl Tapp). Although new stars are at the ready — watch for sophomore CB Victor "Macho" Harris — this could tax all of Beamer's extensive strategic skills.

OUR CALL: The program must be rebuilt around a punishing running game until Glennon gets settled in. Virginia Tech should be 5-0 when it goes to Boston College on Oct. 12.



21. PENN STATE

All the way back, or was that a one-shot deal?

Joe Paterno rebuilt, now he has to shore up the foundation. The Lions have a combination of a new quarterback and an inexperienced offensive line, which seems to make a run at the Big Ten virtually impossible. Still, these guys are confident, talented at the other skill positions, super-strong at linebacker and hell-bent on showing that last year's 11-win season wasn't merely an aberration.

THE GOOD NEWS: A knee injury kept All-American LB Paul Posluszny from leaving early for the NFL. He'll be anchoring the strength of the team this fall. On offense, running backs Tony Hunt and Austin Scott will have to carry the load, at least early.

THE BAD NEWS: Former Penn State great Jack Ham said Anthony Morelli has the quickest release he has seen since Terry Bradshaw. Others aren't so sure about the less-mobile Morelli's ability to replace Michael Robinson.

OUR CALL: By Sept. 24, the Lions will have traveled to Notre Dame and Ohio State. That's potentially two losses before October. This looks like a third-place team in the Big Ten, at best.



22. NEBRASKA

Huskers climb back to top of Big 12 North

The Huskers have to be the favorites in a diminished Big 12 North. Bill Callahan, after taking Nebraska through a sometimes-painful transition, is in his third season and established a hint of momentum with a thrilling bowl win over Michigan. Both sides of the line are developing a personality, and if that offensive line can keep quarterback Zac Taylor upright, the offense could evolve into something very good.

THE GOOD NEWS: The running game is back, at least it was in the spring. Tailbacks Cody Glenn and Marlon Lucky combined for 182 yards in the spring game. That's a good and important sign after the Huskers, almost unthinkably, finished last in the Big 12 in rushing.

THE BAD NEWS: If the bevy of recruits gathered in 2004 and 2005 don't pan out, Nebraska is in trouble. Logic would dictate that this is the year the talent starts contributing. Lucky, for example, was pursued aggressively by USC. The teams play Sept. 16 in L.A. — bad news or opportunity?

OUR CALL: Nebraska is finally turning the corner, and this has the look of a nine-win team. With half the Big 12 North transitioning to new coaches, Nebraska is the class of the division.



23. OREGON

Rough schedule could limit top end

Pac-10 team able to score with anyone ... work to do on defense. The Ducks fit the conference stereotype, right down to the excess of quarterbacks, with Dennis Dixon and Brady Leaf each having moments in the sun last season in relief of injured Kellen Clemens. Their competition — the edge goes to the more-athletic Dixon — might be the most riveting Ducks discussion, but finding a replacement for DT Haloti Ngata is more important.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sophomore RB Jonathan Stewart is a budding star, helped by a line that returns intact. Between Dixon (running out of the spread) and Leaf (drop-back passer), the Ducks can make all the throws ... with the WRs to catch them.

THE BAD NEWS: The schedule-maker has not been kind. Conference games include trips to ASU, Cal, USC and Oregon State (where the Ducks have lost four in a row). Non-conference games are at Fresno State and vs. Oklahoma.

OUR CALL: The Ducks had their bounce-back season in 2005 and now appear to be solidly back in the top half of the volatile (other than USC) conference. With a kinder schedule, Oregon would be a bit higher in the rankings.



24. TEXAS TECH

Air show continues in Lubbock

The Red Raiders will have their fifth starting quarterback in five years — with no definitive word after spring about who it would be. But coach Mike Leach ain't sweating it. Yeah, it's the system ... and it's spectacular. Tech could/should lead the nation in passing for the fourth consecutive season; last year's fabulous numbers included 388.8 yards per game and a national-high 588 attempts in 12 games.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sophomore Graham Harrell or redshirt freshman Chris Todd will saddle up the offense, and each has the proper pedigree to go nutso in this offense. The defense is no longer easy prey and is helped by the return of two linemen from injuries.

THE BAD NEWS: RB Taurean Henderson did a lot of everything and won't be easily replaced. The secondary has holes. The non-conference schedule includes TCU and UTEP — this shapes up as a huge "opportunity game" for the underlings — before the Big 12 season gets hot and heavy.

OUR CALL: The Red Raiders have been 18th and 20th in the past two AP season-ending rankings, and they seem to have found that level again — stuck below Texas and Oklahoma, but at least ahead of Texas A&M.



25. IOWA

Reduced expectations, increased production

Iowa withered to 7-5 last season amid some predictions of a Big Ten title (but not at Lindy's), but now the Hawks might be somewhat overlooked rather than overrated. Kirk Ferentz's team will be typically tough up front on offense, and quarterback Drew Tate probably still has some of the magic dust left over from 2004. Chances are, Iowa will be a little better than last year. And if not, who cares? The schedule is easier.

THE GOOD NEWS: About that schedule ... there's no Penn State, which leaves games vs. Ohio State and at Michigan as Iowa's big, scary monsters. If the Hawkeyes lose anywhere else, it will be an upset.

THE BAD NEWS: Star LBs Chad Greenway and Abdul Hodge aren't around anymore to clean up the mess left by the defensive line. This season, DE Ken Iwebema and pals will have to help out the linebackers, not the other way around.

OUR CALL: With Ohio State camped on top, the Big Ten title isn't exactly there for the taking. But who's to stop Iowa from being second? Maybe only the Hawks themselves.



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☐ Alabama	\$1,300,000	☐ East Carolina	\$300,000	☐ LSU	\$1,950,000	☐ Notre Dame	\$1,770,000	☐ Texas A&M	\$810,000
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☐ Arkansas	\$740,000	☐ Florida International	\$300,000	☐ Miami	\$1,590,000	☐ Oklahoma St	\$370,000	☐ Toledo	\$980,000
☐ Arkansas St	\$300,000	☐ Florida St	\$1,450,000	☐ Miami-Ohio	\$750,000	☐ Oregon	\$1,340,000	☐ Troy State	\$300,000
☐ Army	\$300,000	☐ Fresno State	\$950,000	☐ Michigan	\$1,440,000	☐ Oregon State	\$770,000	☐ Tulane	\$300,000
☐ Auburn	\$1,620,000	☐ Georgia	\$1,430,000	☐ Michigan St	\$950,000	☐ Penn State	\$1,360,000	☐ Tulsa	\$310,000
☐ Ball State	\$300,000	☐ Georgia Tech	\$1,150,000	☐ Middle Tenn St	\$300,000	☐ Pittsburgh	\$710,000	☐ UCLA	\$1,250,000
☐ Baylor	\$300,000	☐ Hawaii	\$500,000	☐ Minnesota	\$1,000,000	☐ Purdue	\$810,000	☐ Utah	\$970,000
☐ Boise State	\$1,060,000	☐ Houston	\$300,000	☐ Mississippi	\$330,000	☐ Rice	\$300,000	☐ Utah State	\$300,000
☐ Boston College	\$1,230,000	☐ Idaho	\$300,000	☐ Mississippi St	\$400,000	☐ Rutgers	\$460,000	☐ Vanderbilt	\$300,000
☐ Bowling Green	\$610,000	☐ Illinois	\$300,000	☐ Missouri	\$880,000	☐ San Diego St	\$300,000	☐ Virginia	\$710,000
☐ Buffalo	\$300,000	☐ Indiana	\$400,000	☐ Navy	\$880,000	☐ San Jose St	\$300,000	☐ Virginia Tech	\$1,360,000
☐ BYU	\$840,000	☐ Iowa	\$1,320,000	☐ Nebraska	\$1,260,000	☐ South Carolina	\$1,210,000	☐ Wake Forest	\$850,000
☐ California	\$1,340,000	☐ Iowa State	\$1,190,000	☐ Nevada	\$540,000	☐ South Florida	\$300,000	☐ Washington	\$360,000
☐ Central Florida	\$820,000	☐ Kansas	\$440,000	☐ Nevada - Las Vegas	\$300,000	☐ Southern Cal	\$1,810,000	☐ Washington St	\$300,000
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☐ Cincinnati	\$300,000	☐ Kent	\$300,000	☐ New Mexico St	\$300,000	☐ Southern Miss	\$680,000	☐ Western Michigan	\$300,000
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RATING THE TEAMS I-III

1. Notre Dame ...IND 1	6. USC PAC-10 1	11. Michigan Big Ten 2	16. Miami ACC 2	21. Penn State ...Big Ten 3
2. Ohio State Big Ten 1	7. Oklahoma Big 12 2	12. Florida State .ACC 1	17. TCU MWC 2	22. Nebraska Big 12 3
3. West Virginia .Big East 1	8. Auburn SEC 2	13. Louisville Big East 2	18. Clemson ACC 3	23. Oregon PAC-10 4
4. Texas Big 12 1	9. Cal PAC-10 2	14. Georgia SEC 4	19. Arizona State .PAC-10 3	24. Texas Tech ...Big 12 4
5. Florida SEC 1	10. LSU SEC 3	15. Utah MWC 1	20. Virginia Tech .ACC 4	25. Iowa Big Ten 4

No. Team	Conf.	Conf. Rank	
26. Boston College	ACC	5	Second ACC go-round could be rugged ... but don't count 'em out.
27. Tulsa	CUSA	1	Defending league champs back for more with 16 returning starters.
28. Tennessee	SEC	5	Volts need the Erik Ainge from 2004 (not 2005) to show up.
29. Texas A&M	Big 12	5	On the rise, but not yet a consistent threat to Texas, Oklahoma.
30. Rutgers	Big East	3	Greg Schiano has officially pulled Rutgers out of its long slumber.
31. UTEP	CUSA	2	QB Jordan Palmer leads Mike Price's explosive offense.
32. Purdue	Big Ten	5	Easy early sked should have Boilers 4-0 heading to Notre Dame.
33. Arkansas	SEC	6	Enough of that two-year rebuilding plan; Hogs ready to feast.
34. Georgia Tech	ACC	6	Four straight seven-win seasons; could be more this year.
35. South Carolina	SEC	7	Spurrier's young team is absolutely loaded for bear ... in 2007.
36. Alabama	SEC	8	Defense isn't strong enough this season to win games by itself.
37. UCLA	PAC-10	5	Loss of offensive firepower has Bruins slipping to middle of Pac-10.
38. Michigan State	Big Ten	6	With exciting QB Drew Stanton, MSU ends two-year bowl drought.
39. Nevada	WAC	1	Pack brings back 14 starters from a team that won nine games.
40. Iowa State	Big 12	6	Bret Meyer looks like the Big 12's best quarterback.
41. Maryland	ACC	7	Back to back losing seasons? Ralph Friedgen will correct that.
42. Akron	MAC	1	Defending MAC champs have league's best QB — Luke Getsy.
43. Boise State	WAC	2	Chris Petersen will win WAC titles, just like his predecessors.
44. UCF	CUSA	3	Golden Knights went from zero to eight (victories) in one season.
45. Arizona	PAC-10	6	Sneaking into the postseason for first time since '98 is worthy goal.
46. BYU	MWC	3	Offense shows signs of the good ol' days at BYU.
47. Southern Miss	CUSA	4	The model program for success in C-USA; will contend again.
48. Missouri	Big 12	7	QB Chase Daniel takes over for record-setting Brad Smith.
49. Houston	CUSA	5	Cougars could steal C-USA title behind high-flying passing game.
50. Wisconsin	Big Ten	7	Not enough here to be Big Ten contenders for coach Bret Bielema.
51. Pittsburgh	Big East	4	Dave Wannstedt needs to coax a better year out of QB Tyler Palko.
52. Hawaii	WAC	3	In Hawaii's offense, look for Colt Brennan to lead nation in passing.
53. Oklahoma State	Big 12	8	Bobby Reid made big improvement in his accuracy in the spring.
54. Fresno State	WAC	4	Four-game skid to end last season — motivation or trend?
55. Northern Illinois	MAC	2	Garrett Wolfe rushed for 1,588 yards in nine games last season.
56. South Florida	Big East	5	Bulls seem to be right on the edge of another bowl game.
57. Colorado	Big 12	9	Dan Hawkins era might not start with a bang, but he'll get there.
58. Toledo	MAC	3	Earned at least a share of division title in four of past five years.
59. Oregon State	PAC-10	7	Matt Moore must cut down on interceptions for Beavers to rise.
60. Ole Miss	SEC	9	Ed Orgeron's strong recruiting yields new QB Brent Schaeffer.
61. Stanford	PAC-10	8	Offense finally passable ... but now the defense rebuilds.
62. Northwestern	Big Ten	8	RB Tyrell Sutton will carry offense while new QB gets feet wet.
63. Wake Forest	ACC	8	Deacons have postseason ability after three losing seasons.
64. Navy	IND	2	Breaking in a new QB won't stop Mids from getting to another bowl.
65. Kansas	Big 12	10	Lucky Jayhawks: Oklahoma, Texas, Texas Tech leave schedule.
66. Minnesota	Big Ten	9	Gophers' running game, ergo the offense, won't be as potent.
67. Washington State	PAC-10	9	Cougs have WR Jason Hill; might really miss RB Jerome Harrison.
68. Kansas State	Big 12	11	Ron Prince won't immediately have the burden of high expectations.
69. Kentucky	SEC	10	Wildcats need winning season for Rich Brooks' job security.
70. North Carolina	ACC	9	John Bunting carries on after a 24-36 record in five seasons.
71. Colorado State	MWC	4	Defense needs major improvement for Rams to challenge in MWC.
72. Virginia	ACC	10	Hefty personnel losses to the NFL send Cavs reeling for a year.

No. Team	Conf.	Conf. Rank	
73. Washington	PAC-10	10	Once-mighty Huskies have won three Pac-10 games in two years.
74. UAB	CUSA	6	Figuring out who replaces QB Darrell Hackney is Job 1.
75. New Mexico	MWC	5	New O-coordinator Bob Toledo, but no more Dontrell Moore at RB.
76. Illinois	Big Ten	10	Oklahoma O-line transfer Akim Millington a key addition.
77. N.C. State	ACC	11	Unexpected draft exodus (Mario Williams, et al) hits Pack hard.
78. Louisiana Tech	WAC	5	Has tied for third in WAC past two seasons ... but won't this year.
79. San Diego State	MWC	6	Chuck Long gets a chance to reform chronic underachievers.
80. Indiana	Big Ten	11	A 4-7 debut under Terry Hoeggner seen as reason for optimism.
81. Miami (Ohio)	MAC	4	WR/returner Ryne Robinson is MAC's most exciting player.
82. Mississippi State	SEC	11	Sylvester Croom likes "team togetherness" in his third season.
83. La-Lafayette	Sun Belt	1	Cajuns ride strong 2005 finish to their first Sun Belt championship.
84. Connecticut	Big East	6	Perhaps all those 2005 injuries will lead to great 2006 depth.
85. Western Michigan	MAC	5	QB Ryan Cubit, playing for dad Bill, gets sixth season of eligibility.
86. Memphis	CUSA	7	Without DeAngelo Williams, gaining fourth straight bowl will be tough.
87. Baylor	Big 12	12	Wins over Oklahoma State, Iowa State showed progress.
88. SMU	CUSA	8	Ponies, 5-6 last season, aim for first winning season since 1997.
89. UNLV	MWC	7	Big-time transfers, including QB Rocky Hinds, give new hope.
90. Cincinnati	Big East	7	Offense not yet improved enough for Bearcats to make a move.
91. Air Force	MWC	8	AFA lost ground recently to rival Navy and the Mountain West.
92. Syracuse	Big East	8	Orange will get more than last season's one win ... but not a lot.
93. Ohio	MAC	6	Frank Solich's first team was last in the MAC in passing.
94. Vanderbilt	SEC	12	Dores squandered chance to surge with Jay Cutler at QB.
95. Wyoming	MWC	9	Cowboys ended last season on a six-game losing streak.
96. Bowling Green	MAC	7	Offense just can't be as good without QB Omar Jacobs.
97. Duke	ACC	12	Blue Devils in ACC games this decade: 3-45.
98. East Carolina	CUSA	9	WR Aundrae Allison is a big-play threat for coach Skip Holtz.
99. Army	IND	3	Won four of last five games, losing only to Navy.
100. Ball State	MAC	8	Brady Hoke's three-year record with the Cardinals: 10-24.
101. Marshall	CUSA	10	Herd coming off 4-7 record, first losing season since 1983.
102. Central Michigan	MAC	9	New QB will make it hard to repeat 5-3 record in MAC games.
103. Troy	Sun Belt	2	Turning to JC transfer QB Omar Haugabook in new passing offense.
104. Tulane	CUSA	11	Katrina forced Tulane to play in 11 different cities last year.
105. North Texas	Sun Belt	3	Jamario Thomas trying to regain form (2004 rushing NCAA champ).
106. Rice	CUSA	12	Todd Graham comes in as new coach and puts in the Spread.
107. Arkansas State	Sun Belt	4	Changes in the backfield likely preclude back-to-back titles.
108. La-Monroe	Sun Belt	5	NCAA said "Indians" must go ... so now they're the Warhawks.
109. Utah State	WAC	6	Second year in WAC should be a lot like the first one (3-8 overall).
110. San Jose State	WAC	7	Dick Tomey's crew probably still a year or two away.
111. Fla.-International	Sun Belt	6	Rebuilding and difficult schedule equals another losing season.
112. Middle Tennessee	Sun Belt	7	New coach Rick Stockstill has vast background in all offenses.
113. Kent State	MAC	10	Golden Flashes go from very young to simply young.
114. Idaho	WAC	8	Dennis Erickson will make a difference, but Vandals have far to go.
115. Eastern Michigan	MAC	11	Eagles have gone 4-7 in each of two years under Jeff Genyk.
116. New Mexico State	WAC	9	Hal Mumme's schemes should begin to take hold in Year 2.
117. Fla. Atlantic	Sun Belt	8	Given more time, the Owls will be one of Sun Belt's best teams.
118. Buffalo	MAC	12	Tough place for ex-Nebraska QB Turner Gill's first chance as head coach.
119. Temple	IND	4	New coach Al Golden has only one way to go — up.

Terry, Howie, Jimmy... (and Dan, Boomer, Chris and Phil)



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The Spread of the *SPREAD*



Texas, Washington State, West Virginia, Baylor, Purdue, Ohio State, Florida, Texas Tech, Penn State, Oregon, Cal Berkeley, Northwestern, Hawaii, Michigan State, Clemson, Memphis, Utah, Bowling Green, Toledo, Arkansas, Rice

Illustration by Bruce MacPherson

The Spread has branched out to every corner of the country, with the map (above) showing some of the new and old practitioners. Here's further details on who uses it, and how.

TEXAS

Without implementation of the read option, with Vince Young in the shotgun, the Horns wouldn't be national champs.

WASHINGTON STATE

Big-time passers — Drew Bledsoe, Ryan Leaf, et al. — have excelled in Mike Price's one-back system that remains under Bill Doba. Price uses it at UTEP.

WEST VIRGINIA

This is the favorite offseason spot for coaches who want to study the way Rich Rodriguez runs the Spread.

BAYLOR

The Bears are going to the Spread this season under first-year coordinator Lee Hays, who helped West Texas A&M lead Division II in passing last year.

PURDUE

Joe Tiller brought his "basketball on grass" from Wyoming in 1996 ... and there went the days of three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust in Woody and Bo's Big Ten.

OHIO STATE

With QB Troy Smith at the helm, the Buckeyes dabbled in the Spread last year and will do more in 2006. Vince Young Part II?

FLORIDA

Urban Meyer's offenses at Bowling Green and Utah took off in the second year of his Spread offense. Gator fans expect the same in Year 2.

TEXAS TECH

Mike Leach uses his Spread offense, with wide splits between the linemen, in order to pass nearly two-thirds of the time.

PENN STATE

Joe Paterno, never too old to learn new tricks, added the read option Spread (and some talented freshmen) to his repertoire in the 2005 bounce-back season.

OREGON

With new Spread elements last season, the Ducks improved previous year's production by 10 points and 60 yards per game.

CAL

There's nothing wrong with Jeff Tedford's offense, but he hired Northwestern assistant Mike Dunbar to fatten the playbook with the Spread.

NORTHWESTERN

Randy Walker got his stuff from Tulane in the late '90s when Rich Rodriguez and Tommy Bowden were there ... and now Walker is one of the experts.

HAWAII

June Jones' Run-N-Shoot allowed Timmy Chang to recently rewrite some major Division I-A passing records.

MICHIGAN STATE

John L. Smith has had more than 20 years as a head coach to hone his Spread attack, learning in the early 1980s at Idaho under Dennis Erickson, who has become a Vandal again.

CLEMSON

Tommy Bowden turned his Spread over to coordinator Rob Spence (from Toledo) last season and improved from 110th in total offense nationally to 53rd.

SPREADING *the Spread*

By Andrew Bagnato

THE '*hot new thing*' IN OFFENSE HAS DEEP, TANGLED ROOTS

The Spread is the most exciting new offense in college football.

Well, it's certainly exciting, unless you happen to be a defensive coordinator. When the Spread is run right — with a nimble quarterback and a fleet of vapor-quick receivers — every play is a potential jailbreak.

But the Spread isn't new. Not really.

If you think it is, consider the words of David Nelson, the former secretary of the NCAA football rules committee: "If you don't have a quarterback who can run and throw, forget it. The defenses will lock in on the offense like a nut and bolt. The running and passing quarterback is the mainspring of the offense ..."

Nelson wrote this in an essay entitled, "The changing character of football."

In 1970.

Florida coach Urban Meyer, who is widely credited with popularizing the Spread, was 6 years old.

"The surest thing about football is that somewhere a coach will come up with a different frill, a unique twist, or a new look to give the game added color," Nelson wrote.

Yeah, to give the game "added color" and to keep his job by moving the football and winning a few games.

In the first decade of the new century, nothing has created more color than the Spread favored by Meyer, Northwestern coach Randy Walker and a growing legion of apostles. The Spread has been described as "basketball on grass" because it emphasizes speed and skill over brute force.

With receivers strung from sideline to sideline and a quarterback shoveling short passes like a point guard, the Spread may appear to be revolutionary. But it is based on a concept that goes back decades: create mis-

matches by forcing defenses to cover the width of the field and much of its length. Its principles go back to the earliest option attacks.

The idea behind the option was to spread the defense over as much of the field as possible, then find its most vulnerable area — the faster, the better. The Spread does the same thing, with the added threat of the downfield pass.

"The more of the field you have to defend, the more wide-open the game becomes," said Michigan State coach John L. Smith, who ran a version of the Spread at Louisville, Utah State and Idaho. "You get a fast guy on a guy that's not quite as fast. I think it forces you to defend the entire field,

without a doubt."

Pinpointing the Spread's origins is almost as difficult as figuring out how to stop it. Here's a sampling of some coaches' theories:

- New Mexico State's Hal Mumme:

"Our offense is basically the old BYU offense of the '80s. We just tweaked it. We added the shotgun to it and added the no-huddle."

- Washington State's Bill Doba:

"Whoever did it, it's a version of the triple option if they run the shovel pass with it. But if they pull the guard, now you're looking at the old Nebraska belly option."

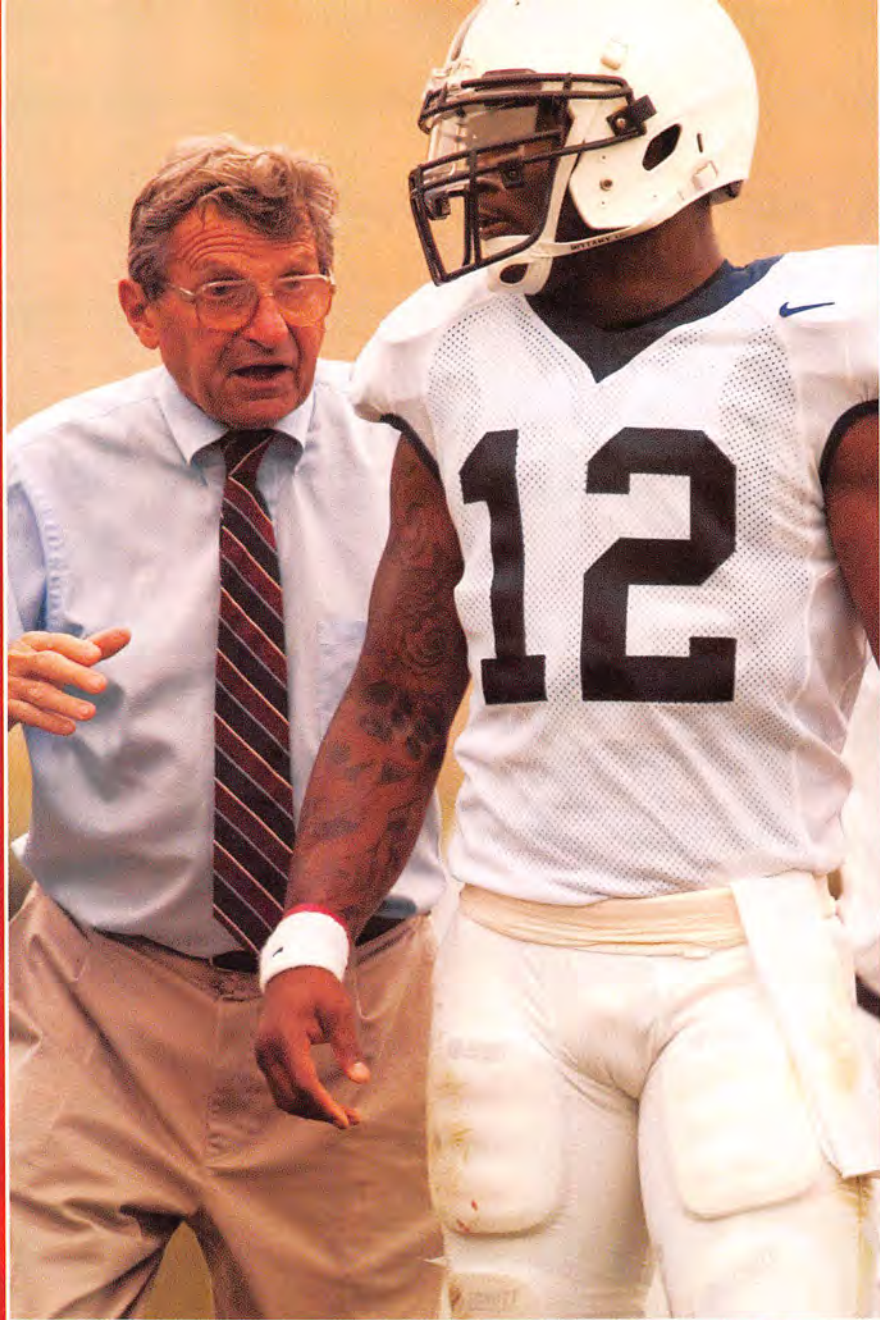
- Washington's Tyrone Willingham:

"I would probably venture to believe that it would be what Mississippi

Photo by Chris Bernacchi/SportPics



Northwestern's offense under Randy Walker has made the Wildcats a consistent thorn in the Big Ten, especially when they had Brett Basanez at quarterback. (Photo by Chris Bernacchi/SportPics)



When Joe Paterno needed to spark the Penn State offense, he turned to quarterback Michael Robinson and more of a wide-open attack.

Valley State did some years ago with their offense (featuring quarterback Willie Totten and wide receiver Jerry Rice). I think some of it has come from the Northwest portion of the country."

Yes, it seems to come in waves. Jack Elway ... Dennis Erickson ... Mike Price ... John L. Smith ... Joe Tiller ... Bill Doba. Tiller went from Washington State, where he coached with Price, to Wyoming and then to Purdue ...

Erickson cut his teeth on the spread back as an assistant for Elway at Cal State Northridge in the mid-'70s, when he picked up some of the concepts

that a fellow named Jack Neumeier was using at Granada Hills High School while trying to get the most out of a sophomore quarterback he had named John Elway.

Some of the Spread was bastardized into what became the NFL-ized cookie-cutter West Coast offense, but the Spread takes more advantage of mobile quarterbacks and creating personnel mismatches.

Nowadays, the so-called refined versions — the ones that coaches can share at clinics and tinker with on the back of napkins — actually come in

two flavors of Spread.

One is aimed at creating mismatches at the line of scrimmage and exploiting them with option-style runs, like Texas did with Vince Young on the way to last season's national title. The other is about throwing the ball all over the lot, like Texas Tech, which led the nation last season with 588 pass attempts — that's 49 per game.

"There's two different philosophies," Mumme said. "The Urban Meyer group, they basically spread you out to run the ball. There's not as many people who do what we do. We're going to spread you out to throw the ball."

Well, that's pretty much what the Run 'N' Shoot used to do, right? Mouse Davis with QB Neil Lomax at Portland State? John Jenkins with QB David Klingler and Andre Ware at Houston?

This is a "new" offensive approach with twisted, tangled roots deep into college football's past.

As a rookie head coach in 1989, Mumme deployed the Spread at Iowa Wesleyan, and he sharpened it when he moved to Valdosta State and then Kentucky. In Mumme's first season at Lexington, the Wildcats improved from 109th to sixth in Division I-A total offense. One of Mumme's assistants was Mike Leach, who went to Oklahoma and then to Texas Tech. His Red Raiders offense has become the scourge of the Big 12.

"When we were really in a rhythm and we were rocking and rolling, we didn't think anybody could stop us," Mumme said. "That wasn't true, but that's what it felt like."

Meyer's version of the spread grabbed the national spotlight in 2004, when he led Utah to an unbeaten season and a Fiesta Bowl berth. But Meyer had installed a similar attack when he took over at Bowling Green in 2001. That year, he sent his assistant coaches to Northwestern, Purdue, Louisville and West Virginia to learn the principles of the spread.

When Meyer moved on to Utah, he inherited quarterback Alex Smith, whose poise, quick feet and rifle arm made him almost uniquely qualified to pilot the scheme. The Utes also happened to have a band of speedy wide receivers.

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By the end of the 2004 season, Utah ranked third in Division I-A scoring offense, averaging a staggering 45.3 points per game. Not coincidentally, the Utes went 12-0 and capped their perfect season with a victory in the Fiesta Bowl, becoming the first school from outside the power conferences to crash the Bowl Championship Series.

Smith became the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL draft. Meyer leaped to a rich contract at Florida, where he put his offense into the seemingly capable hands of Chris Leak.

Gator Nation, longing for a return to

attack favored by his much-derided predecessor, Ron Zook.

Florida averaged 28.4 points in the regular season, 50th nationally. That raised an interesting question: Was the Spread dead? Or had it merely slowed down when faced with quicker, stronger defenses that dominate the SEC?

The answer isn't clear. But a number of skeptics, including Southern California coach Pete Carroll, have expressed doubts about the Spread.

"People are always looking for the hot new deal," Carroll said. "I don't particularly like it because it takes

like chess in chinstraps. But some of those efforts have bordered on ludicrous.

Consider what happened last fall in a Mid-American Conference game between Bowling Green, which still runs Meyer's Spread, and Ball State. As the Falcons broke the huddle on first-and-10, they looked up and saw that Ball State had dropped nine defenders into pass coverage, leaving two men on the line of scrimmage.

"We're just looking and going, 'Holy smokes!'" Bowling Green head coach Gregg Brandon recalled.

The Falcons completed a short pass. Soon after, Brandon ordered quarterback Omar Jacobs to "take off" any time he spotted a two-man front. It may sound like something the quarterback would do in a backyard game of touch football. But it made sense.

"You laugh," Brandon said, "but you're going to run for 8-10 yards before they can even touch you."

A two-man front is probably not the secret to stopping the Spread. But eventually, defensive coordinators will find a way to slow the scheme. And then it will be time for the offenses to adjust. Chances are they'll come up with something that's been used before.

"A lot of people are spreading it and throwing it more and throwing it better," Smith said. "It'll come around to the point where we line up in the Wishbone again pretty soon." ■

Andrew Bagnato is a Phoenix-based sports writer for AP.

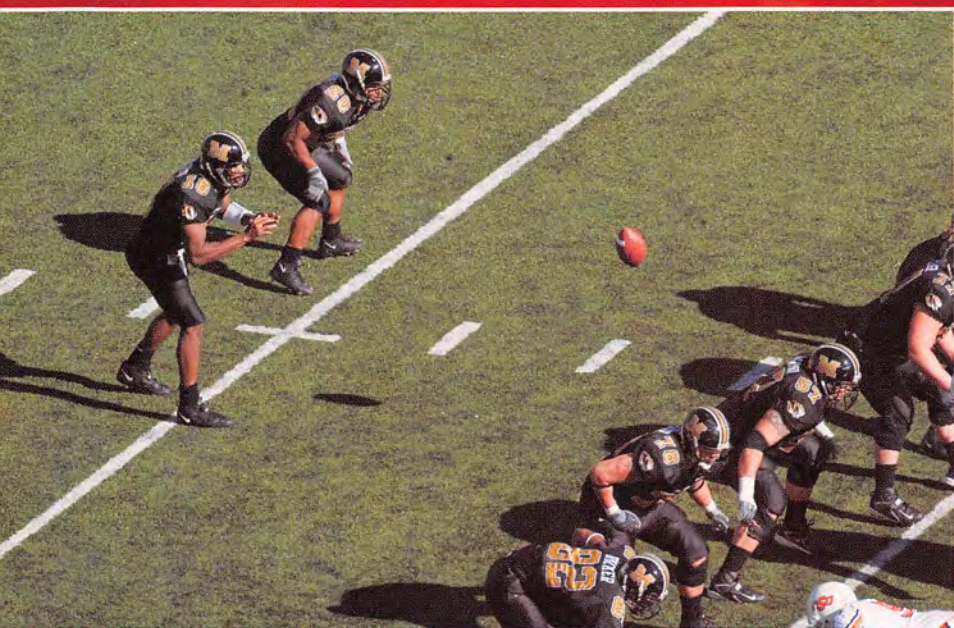


Photo by Michael McManara/Sporting News

Missouri quarterback Brad Smith, one of the most dangerous run-pass quarterbacks in the nation, was able to take advantage of the Spread last season.

Steve Spurrier-style offensive fireworks, couldn't wait to see Meyer's offense light up the scoreboard. "His version of the Spread offense has ravaged foes, and visions of 50-point games and a slash-and-burn march through the SEC are making Gator fans giddy," *The Orlando Sentinel* gushed in August.

But the only thing that got slashed was Florida's offensive production. After an impressive start against over-matched Wyoming and Louisiana Tech, the Gators sputtered. The low point came in a 31-3 loss at Alabama. At times, Meyer's offense drew uncomfortable comparisons to the conservative

away from the standard traditional football stuff."

That "stuff" is what the longtime powerhouses ran for years, using their advantages in size and depth to control the line of scrimmage. Think of USC's "Student Body Right," which Pac-10 rivals were powerless to stop even when they knew it was coming.

The Spread is part of the move toward parity, and it's no coincidence that the Spread flourished at places such as Northwestern and Utah, whose gridiron traditions were, to be kind, limited.

As the Spread evolves, so will defensive coordinators' efforts to slow it. It's

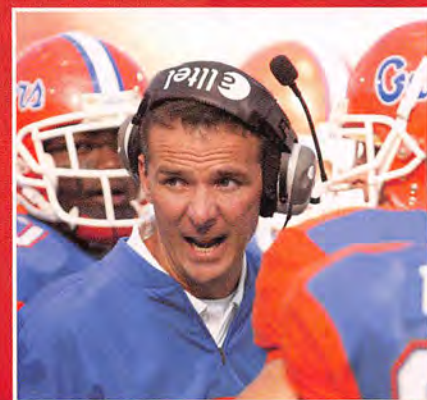


Photo by Doug Bane/Getty Images

Florida's Urban Meyer "schemed" his way to the top at Bowling Green and then at Utah.



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FIGHTING BACK

'THE SPREAD' DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN DEFENSES ARE TOAST

By Michael Bradley

Florida State linebackers coach Kevin Steele has only three questions to ask when it comes to stopping the Spread offense:

Are they spreading you out to throw?

Are they spreading you out to run?

Are they spreading you out to throw, run, and option?

With all due respect, Coach, what else is there?

"Three different game plans," said Steele, who was Baylor's head coach from 1999-2002.

Three different headaches is more like it.

Offensive coordinators who use some form of the Spread still seem to be ahead of the curve, but not defensive strategies. Coordinators on that side of the ball are evolving to where they can slow down the Spread or even keep it completely off balance by dictating — through pre- and post-snap tactics — the quarterback's decisions.

It's not time to declare victory, but there is hope.

Defensive coaches acknowledge a few standards that help keep the Spread under control.

A DELICATE BALANCE

If the offense opens with two wides on each side and one back, the defense can't play too many games. "You've got to balance your defenders up," Steele said. "You can't overload on one side. There are limits to what you can do."

Even if you do get defensive equilibrium, there are still risk factors to consider. Putting four defensive backs — or the occasional linebacker — on the receivers can leave a team vulnerable up front, particularly if it uses a pair of safeties along the back line.

"When you have just five in the box, the other team has five blockers and the back, so it's going to run," Illinois defensive coordinator Vince Okruch said.

If a defense has just one safety or nobody backing up, it has to expect a pass. And if a team like West Virginia or Northwestern is operating the Spread, the option comes into play.

Versatile defenders are a must. That's why the emphasis has been on speed over size, on multi-tasking over specialists.

When Purdue had its good defense in 2003 (the Boilermakers stuffed Northwestern, 34-14), it made use of a trio of linebackers (Landon Johnson, Niko Koutouvides and Gilbert Gardner) that was extremely versatile.

"They never came off the field," Purdue defensive coordinator Brock Spack said. "They could run forever, cover receivers and hit in the running game."

MASTERS OF DISGUISE

Spread offenses try to keep defenses off-balance by shifting before the snap, so defenses do the same with "stemming" of the linemen.

"You have to give (offenses) a pre-snap look that



Photo By Streeter Lecka/Getty Images

Florida's Chris Leak wasn't brilliant in his first season in the Spread, but he was still one of the SEC's best quarterbacks.

allows them to believe they have the run-pass option," Okruch said. "Then, you need a way to take it away from them."

Once the ball is snapped, the defense has to be versatile in its execution. Steele said that 10 years ago, Florida State might have used "two coverages" against a Spread offense. Now, the defense will show many more looks, most of them subtle.

"There are nuances," Steele said. "We may adjust a coverage for a specific route. It's not a totally new coverage. It's an adjustment."

The defensive backs aren't the only ones who can confuse the quarterback. By slanting its front four one way or the other after the snap, the defense will induce a quarterback to hand off or take it himself.

"A lot of times, you can dictate which way the (quarterback's) read will go by the way you deploy your defensive linemen," Okruch said.

Finally, there must be the threat of the blitz. Even though some spread attacks invite that kind of pressure — and then burn defenses with quick throws — defenses must plant the idea of bringing extra pass rushers. And when they do blitz, the linebackers and/or defensive backs better get there.

"Ray Lewis blitzing is a lot different than some other people blitzing," Steele said.

MATCH GAME

When it's all over, with the strategies set and the disguises deployed, defending the Spread comes down to one-on-one matchups, the very thing the attacks are trying to create in the first place. Sometimes, offenses just have better athletes, able to turn 5-yard completions into 60-yard touchdowns. Or defenses are so talented that they can simply get by with vanilla schemes.

"The first thing we ask when facing the Spread is, 'Can we beat them one-on-one with the guys we have?'" Spack said. "If we can't, we have to mix some fronts and play some games."

Many times, a defensive back is alone against a pass-catcher who has just grabbed a quick slant or hitch. Corral him, and the damage is minimal. Miss, and it's possibly disastrous. Worse, the receiver might have a blocker in front of him.

"Cornerbacks and safeties have to get off blocks," Spack said. "They have to be big enough and fast enough to cover and make tackles."

Which, as in all things college football, goes back to recruiting. If a coaching staff is fortunate enough to get elite athletes — and, better yet, big elite athletes — do those guys play receiver or running back, or linebacker and defensive back?

If they go to defense, they better have a good football IQ to be able to ingest and apply a vast amount of knowledge.

"Take one zone blitz scheme," Spack said. "It can be run against 10 formations, and there can be 10 to 15 plays run out of that formation. That's 150 things a player has to know for one zone blitz. So, intelligence comes into play."

So does luck. Sometimes, that's all a defense has against the Spread. ■

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CHARACTERS WELCOME

BY
JOHN MCGRATH



Alas, cookie-cutter college coaches are all-too common

A poll asking college football fans to identify the most exciting play from last season would produce dozens of different answers, but there is no doubt about the most bizarre moment of 2005.

It occurred during a University of Southern California practice on Halloween, when running back LenDale White, seemingly upset about his diminished role in the offense, cursed out head coach Pete Carroll and stormed off the field, apparently quitting the team.

As Carroll addressed the team afterward, White could be seen on the rooftop of a nearby building, scuffling with equipment coordinator Tino Dominguez. Before anybody on the field had a chance to intervene, a body wearing White's No. 21 jersey appeared to tumble six stories to the ground.

But not really. White's jersey was placed on a dummy. Ha-Ha. Gotcha.

The elaborate stunt was orchestrated by Carroll, who wanted to break up midseason doldrums between a blowout victory over Washington State and a blowout victory over Stanford.

"The coaches were the funniest," Carroll would say later. "They couldn't believe we let him go."

Macabre? No doubt. Over the top? Absolutely.

Welcome to The Pete Carroll Show, starring Pete Carroll as America's most defiantly authentic college football coach.

In a profession populated by survivors of charisma-bypass surgery, Carroll never would allow something as insignificant as Extremely Poor Taste to prevent him from spicing up a practice.

Of course, there are easier and more sensible ways to guide college athletes through the dog days of a long season than staging mock death leaps. But that's Carroll, whose fascination with pranksmanship suggests he probably spent more time in the dean's office than on the dean's list.

"He's kind of a little kid inside a grown man," former Trojans quarterback Matt Leinart once said.

Noted Leinart: "You don't get that in coaches today."

Given his record — the Trojans came within one play of winning their third straight national championship last season — you'd think college presidents overseeing search parties for new coaches would use Carroll as the prototype.

But they almost always settle for the more staid candidate, somebody who is wary of lights, suspicious of cameras, and believes that "P.R." ought to be an abbreviation for Prevention of Reporting.

Look around. The sidelines are teeming with furtive types murmuring into the mouthpieces on their headsets, careful to conceal their conversations from lip-reading spies by wielding the playbook chart over their mouths.

Hey, it's a cut-throat business; a guy's gotta do what a guy's gotta do. But during the spring intrasquad game?

"Character" is the most-used word by a coach during any given luncheon-banquet speech, but the coach fixated on the character issue would rather take a barefoot walk on hot coals (hey, Dick Tomey did that at Hawaii) than be known as "a character."

Georgia's Mark Richt is indistinguishable from Iowa's Kirk Ferentz, who is indistinguishable from California's Jeff Tedford. Gary Pinkel of Missouri simultaneously resembles no coach in particular and a hundred coaches in general.

And there's Oklahoma's Mike Stoops. No, wait, Bob Stoops is at Oklahoma. Mike Stoops, his brother, is the coach at Arizona. If you force them to remove the visors with their school's logo, Bob Stoops is as tough to tell from Mike Stoops as Johnny Winter is from Edgar Winter.

A few faces in the crowd stand out. Phil Fulmer of Tennessee resembles an ex-warden. Larry Coker of Miami resembles an ex-astronaut. South Carolina's Steve Spurrier looks like he could be co-leading a senior-golf event (The Exasperated Grimace Classic at Wobbly Pass), and North Carolina State's Chuck Amato peers through the kind of sunglasses seen on Strawberry Alarm Clock album covers.

But who are these guys?

Some have been around the block, to be sure, and bring genuine resumes to a job so glamorous it has tempted otherwise honorable sportsmen to either exaggerate or invent collegiate accomplishments.

Nebraska's Bill Callahan took the Oakland Raiders to the Super Bowl. Pittsburgh's Dave Wannstedt was defensive coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys' Super Bowl champions. Alabama's Mike Shula is the son of Don Shula, whose 1972 Miami Dolphins produced the only perfect season of the Super Bowl era.

But, again, who are these guys?

When you see Lloyd Carr, do you immediately think Michigan? When you see Jim Tressel, do you immediately think Ohio State? Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, college football's foremost rivalry was personified by Bo Schembechler and Woody Hayes, driven more by repulsion toward their most-hated opponent than any satisfaction gained from winning.

One needn't have read their lips — and lips could always be read before mouthpieces were attached to headsets — to realize the coaches from that era were of another time and place.

Bear Bryant's father was a sharecropper; Barry Switzer's

father was a bootlegger. If Switzer were applying for a head-coaching job today, he'd point out that his dad was "self-employed."

It's 2006. Send in the clones.

New Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins, summoned from Boise State to replace Gary Barnett, is a refreshing exception. (Defending his decision to air the ball instead of eating the clock with a lead late in the fourth quarter, Hawkins once told an audience in Boise that Thomas Edison and Mahatma Ghandi would not have taken a knee, "and I sure as hell am not taking a knee." The room erupted with applause.)

Texas Tech's Mike Leach is another free thinker who operates outside the box. Leach's independent streak is the real deal. He never played college football, a biographical quirk he shares with another renowned offensive tactician, Notre Dame's Charlie Weis.

Weis doesn't possess Carroll's zest for the zany, but he's

got that same ability to shirk conventional wisdom. Last September he visited the home of 10-year old Montana Mazurkiewicz, suffering from an inoperable brain tumor. A passionate Notre Dame fan, he asked to call a play. Weis gave his word that Notre Dame's first play in its next game — at Washington — would be in accordance with the child's wishes.

As it turned out, the Irish return team fumbled, forcing quarterback Brady Quinn to take his initial snap on the Notre Dame 1-yard line. Nobody would've blamed Weis if he'd put off the request for a more opportune situa-

tion, but the play was executed as planned, with Quinn completing a 13-yard pass on the right sideline.

Weis knew Montana wasn't alive to see his strategy converted into a first down, which made Weis' determination to keep his word all the more poignant.

Charlie Weis doesn't look the part of the typical 2006 football coach. He's a little bit rumpled, wears a crew cut, leaves onlookers with the impression he'd rather diagram plays on a desk in the basement than strut into a 9 a.m. tee time at a country club.

But in a few decades, when tailgate-party stories are told about the coaching characters during the early 21st century, Charlie Weis will be recalled in the same discussion as Pete Carroll.

And then there will be a moment of silence, as everybody tries to remember at least one of the coaches who succeeded Bo Schembechler at Michigan and Woody Hayes at Ohio State. ■



Illustration by: Bruce MacPherson

LINDY'S 2006

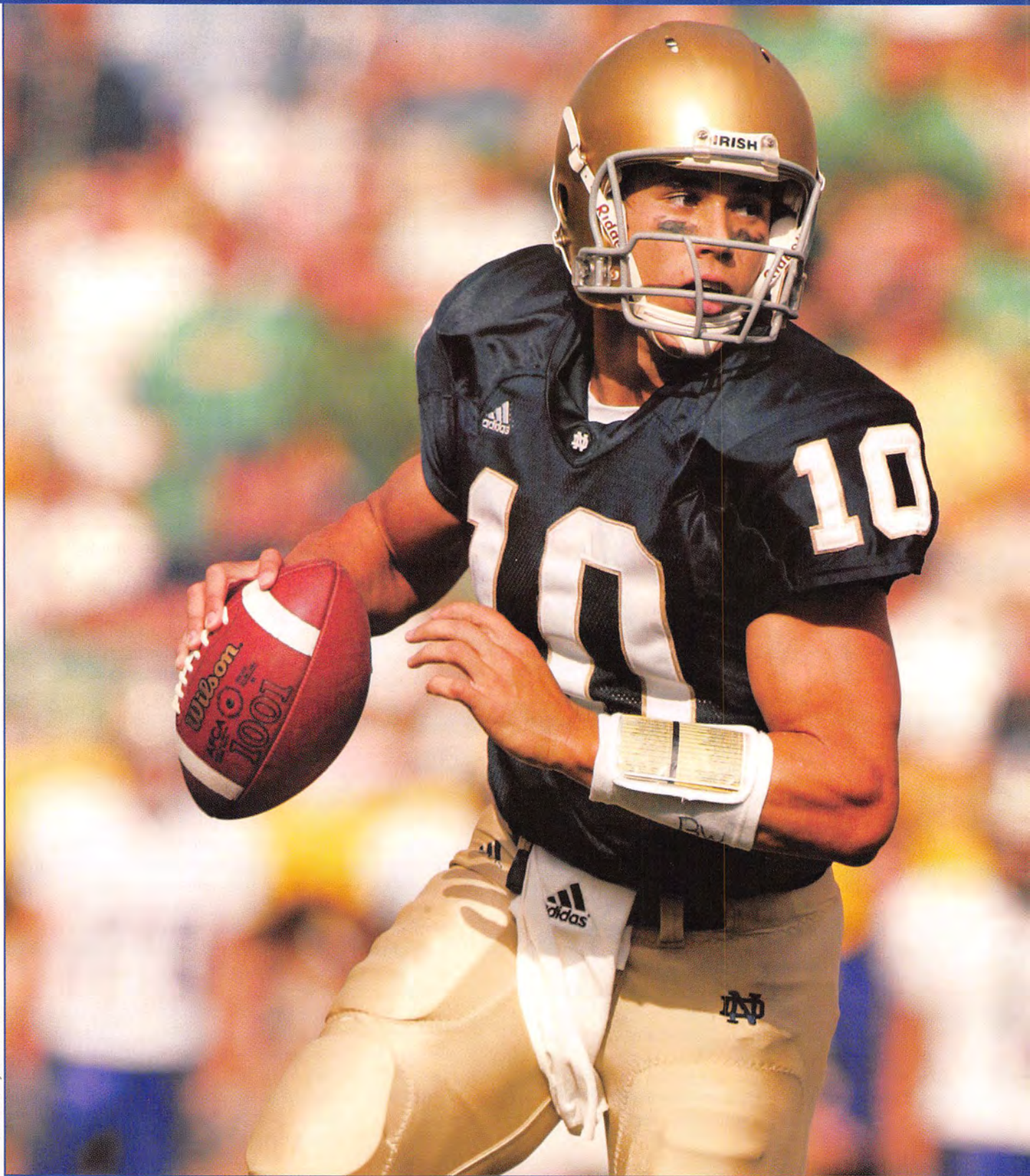


PHOTO BY JOE ROBBINS

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

Quinn Keeps Raising the Bar For the Irish

By Avani Patel

It is a familiar face in a foreign setting, the visage that has stared back at him from the mirror all of his 21 years, transported in his mind into a gallery where only the best of the best are admitted.

When he is running and stretching and lifting and throwing, Notre Dame quarterback Brady Quinn envisions himself as the Heisman Trophy winner that many say he will be by the time the 2006 college football season is done.

"When I work out, when I train, I try to use that as motivation," Quinn says of the Heisman hype that began to envelop him even before last season was in the books.

"You almost become so tired of using that in your head and mentally talking to yourself, saying, 'If you want to be that person up there, if you want to have your face up there with them, this is what you need to do, this is how far you need to push yourself.'"

It is a refreshing departure from the typical player who denies striving for college football's highest individual award.

Then he adds, "When you go in and shower after you're done working out, (the Heisman) doesn't even pop in your head. It's done."

That, of course, is little more than wistful thinking. In Quinn's world, Heisman talk is like oxygen, infusing the air around him, inhaled with every breath. Still, his plan to take a potential lemon (in this case, the endless hype) and turn it into so much lemonade (limitless motivation) is classically Quinn.

After a 9-3 finish in 2005, and with virtually their entire offensive starting lineup back, the Irish enter 2006 as the team *Lindy's* projects as the top contender for the national championship.

Quinn is not blind to the promise the Irish showed last season. But he is far more concerned with correcting the deficiencies that Ohio State exposed in beating Notre Dame, 34-20, in the Fiesta Bowl.

"It showed that it really had to be a complete team effort, and we really had to play at our best level in order to beat a team of that caliber," Quinn said.

"We played tough competition all year, but we didn't seem to play consistently. I felt like, after the game, we were definitely not as good as anyone built us up to be.

"Coach (Charlie) Weis talks about preparing, raising the bar," Quinn added.

During the spring, Quinn did that — not just on the field, in the locker room and in the weight room, but also in the classroom, biting off a tough schedule in order to lighten the load come fall.

"I've put myself in a position to graduate early so that I will be able to focus more on football," said Quinn, who has a double major in political science and finance.

David Slates, Quinn's uncle who coached him throughout his childhood, said Quinn has always supplemented his considerable

innate ability with a strong work ethic.

"He's always been the kid that wanted to stay after to do a little bit more or get to practice early and get in some extra reps," Slates said.

"He's always had the talent," added wide receiver Jeff Samardzija. "And now he's got the confidence that he can go out and, you know, the ball's in his hands and he decides what the outcome is."

Much of that confidence, said Quinn, has come simply from working with Weis, who took over the program in mid-December 2004, several weeks after the university dismissed former coach Tyrone Willingham.

When the storm of Willingham's firing hit, "I'd be lying if I said I didn't have maybe second thoughts about going to another school," Quinn said. "But I kind of used my faith to reassure me that I was here for

a reason."

And when Weis arrived, the trust, at least on Quinn's end, was visceral, virtually instantaneous, and fed by the uncanny resemblance Weis bears to Quinn's late maternal grandfather.

"There are so many similarities. I remember seeing my grandpa get mad, and the kind of facial expression Coach Weis will make is the same that he would make,"

A Pitcher and a Catcher

Quinn's Favorite Target Excels at Being Both

even better."

This fall, however, as the Irish vie to bring home a national championship for the first time in 18 years, Samardzija and Quinn will have to renew that connection without the benefit of their informal summer pitch and catch sessions.

With a fastball that consistently approaches 92 miles

per hour, with a better breaking ball and a solid slider, Samardzija, a starting pitcher on the Notre Dame baseball team, has quickly become a hot prospect, a likely second-round pick expected to spend the summer getting his first taste of professional baseball.

Despite the absences, Irish football coach Charlie Weis has no doubt that Samardzija, excused from all but six of the team's 15 spring practices, will be ready to go when the season kicks off at Georgia Tech on Sept. 2.

"With Jeff being here so infrequently in the spring, you really don't have great timing in the passing game," Weis said. "And I'm not overly worried about that because I want him to finish out the baseball season strong."

Mainieri expects nothing less than for Samardzija to hit the ground running when football season rolls around.

"And hopefully they're going to win a national championship," Mainieri said. "The world is his for the taking."

And he's got the hands to snatch it.

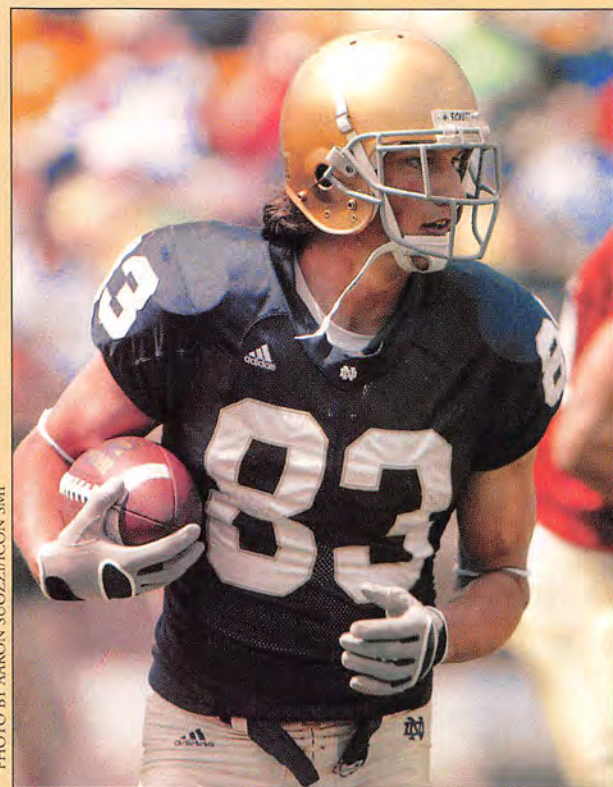


PHOTO BY AARON SUOZZI/ICON SMI

The question Notre Dame baseball coach Paul Mainieri asked of his then-freshman hurler was always the same: "How was (football) practice today?"

And the answer two-sport athlete Jeff Samardzija offered up? Always definitive, recalled Mainieri: "There's nobody on our team that can stop me. I know how to use my body, the backs are kind of small, and if (the ball) is near me, I'm going to catch it."

So when Samardzija last year alchemized a step-in role for injured teammate Rhema McKnight into a consensus All-America campaign, "I was the least surprised guy on campus," Mainieri said. "I'd see the

things he'd do in baseball and I'd put two and two together, (and I knew) if they utilize this guy, he's going to make an impact on this (football) team."

And how.

In 2005, Samardzija, a lanky 6-5 receiver with deceptive speed, quickly became quarterback Brady Quinn's favorite target, and he went on to set ND receiving records for yards (1,249) and touchdowns (15) in a season.

"Obviously, Jeff and I came in together and initially, there was a bond and trust just hanging out together, both on and off the field," Quinn said.

"A lot of people don't get to see us working out together in practice, but there are times in the summer where we'd be working out, throwing the ball together, messing around on off days ... things like that."

Added Samardzija: "Hopefully next year we come out and do the same thing, and

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

Quinn said.

"I feel like in some sense maybe it's the reincarnation of my grandpa, and I know that he's going to take care of me."

Weis has done just that, spending spring practice of 2005 working with Quinn one-on-one to get the signal-caller up to speed on his offensive system.

The effects of that tutoring were readily evident the following season — Quinn finished 2005 having set single-season Notre Dame records in attempts (450), completions (292), passing yards (3,919), yards per game (326.6), touchdown passes (32) and completion percentage (64.5), all while throwing just seven interceptions.

Compare that to his numbers from 2004, when Quinn completed just 54 percent of his passes, managing a so-so 17 touchdowns

and 10 interceptions.

"As different as his numbers were his junior year from his sophomore year, I don't think that Brady was that much better. I think the people around him — the line, his wide receivers, his running backs — the team was better," Slates said.

Plus, with Willingham's quarterbacks coach, Bill Diedrick, "Brady didn't have a very good level of communication," Slates said.

"Quinn would tell his uncle, 'Diedrick will say this and I'll do it, and then he'll say don't do this.' That leads to a lot of indecision. Charlie has allowed him to have a lot of confidence in what he's executing. There's a clear message."

Weis expects a lot out of his quarterback, something he is not averse to adver-

tising.

"Here's my feeling," Weis said. "If he wins the Heisman Trophy, that probably means we win the national championship."

It would also mean Quinn will have traveled quite a distance since his first college start on Sept. 27, 2003 — a 28-10 loss at Purdue — to the pantheon of college football's superstars.

"Physically, I took a lot of abuse that game. It allowed me to kind of see myself, look myself in the mirror the next day, and say, 'Hey, if this is what it's going to be week in and week out, this is still what I want to do,'" Quinn said.

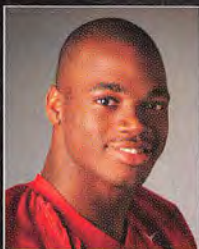
"I love this sport enough to keep going through this."

Avani Patel covers Notre Dame for the Chicago Tribune.

OFFENSE



Brady Quinn



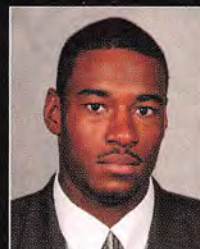
Adrian Peterson



Marshawn Lynch



Dwayne Jarrett



Calvin Johnson



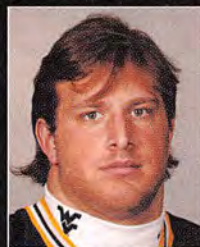
Clark Harris

FIRST TEAM

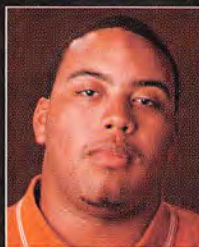
Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Brady Quinn	6-4	231	Sr.	Notre Dame
RB	Adrian Peterson	6-2	215	Jr.	Oklahoma
RB	Marshawn Lynch	5-11	223	Jr.	Cal
WR	Dwayne Jarrett	6-5	210	Jr.	USC
WR	Calvin Johnson	6-4	235	Jr.	Georgia Tech
TE	Clark Harris	6-6	255	Sr.	Rutgers
C	Dan Mozes	6-4	290	Sr.	West Virginia
OL	Justin Blalock	6-4	329	Sr.	Texas
OL	Sam Baker	6-5	305	Jr.	USC
OL	Levi Brown	6-5	325	Sr.	Penn State
OL	Arron Sears	6-4	320	Sr.	Tennessee
PK	Mason Crosby	6-2	210	Sr.	Colorado

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Troy Smith	6-1	215	Sr.	Ohio State
RB	Kenny Irons	5-11	200	Sr.	Auburn
RB	Michael Bush	6-3	250	Sr.	Louisville
WR	Jeff Samardzija	6-5	216	Sr.	Notre Dame
WR	Sidney Rice	6-4	191	Jr.	So. Carolina
TE	Zach Miller	6-5	258	Jr.	Arizona State
C	Ryan Kalil	6-3	285	Sr.	USC
OL	Kasey Studdard	6-3	305	Sr.	Texas
OL	Will Arnold	6-4	322	Jr.	LSU
OL	Joe Thomas	6-8	306	Sr.	Wisconsin
OL	Jake Long	6-7	330	Jr.	Michigan
PK	Brandon Coutu	6-0	185	Jr.	Georgia



Dan Mozes



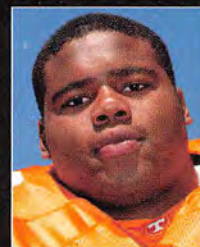
Justin Blalock



Sam Baker



Levi Brown



Arron Sears



Mason Crosby



Wizard of Poz Does it all for Nittany Lions

by Rich Scarcella

Booker went low to block him, with Booker's helmet and shoulder pads colliding with Posluszny's right knee.

"I was really nervous at first because I could tell something wasn't right as soon as I hit the ground," Posluszny said. "I was nervous that I would miss a lot of serious time. Thank God it wasn't the case."

He suffered partial tears of the posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) and medial collateral ligament (MCL), but surgery was not required. He underwent weeks of rehabilitation and was kept out of contact drills during spring practice as a precaution.

"It was hard," he said. "I saw the linebackers out there and I wanted to be with them. I needed to get some contact. I was antsy. I had to be smart and do what was best."

That seems to come naturally. With the gash on the bridge of his nose oozing blood, Posluszny became the face of a defense that carried the Nittany Lions to an 11-1 record, a Big Ten co-championship and the Orange Bowl victory.

He's a technician who's rarely out of position and an athlete who's capable of covering slot receivers. Legendary Lions linebacker Jack Ham, a Hall of Famer with the Pittsburgh Steelers and now radio analyst for Penn State games, has seen every game Posluszny has played in college. Ham said Posluszny is the best linebacker ever to play at Penn State.

"He's not only a great football player, he's a great, great person with great leadership," said coach Joe Paterno. "He's one of the best players we've ever had."

This season, Posluszny can join Dennis Onkotz, Shane Conlan and LaVar Arrington as the Nittany Lions' only two-time All-America linebackers. He also can become the second two-time winner of the Butkus Award, a trophy he's still not sure he deserved.

"I'm not really sure I earned the award," he said. "It goes to show how well we played

Paul Posluszny was overwhelmed by the attention he received during and after last season.

Penn State fans had mailed him hundreds of cards and letters before the Orange Bowl, but not nearly as many as they sent in the weeks after he suffered a knee injury in the triple-overtime victory over Florida State.

"So many fans wrote to me, saying how sorry they were for me and that they would pray for me," Posluszny said.

"To me, that really, really hit home. I mean, there are so many things to pray for. For them to take the time to write to me and pray for me, that's one thing I'll always remember. That's why I love Penn State so much."

The feeling is mutual.

Posluszny already has earned his place

in history at Linebacker U., pulling off the rare double of being an All-American and an Academic All-American last season as a junior. He also won the Bednarik Award as the nation's top defensive player and the Butkus Award as the nation's top linebacker.

He begins this season as *Lindy's* choice for national Defensive Player of the Year.

"I don't think I've been around a guy or have coached a guy who ... whatever 'it' is, he's got 'it,'" defensive coordinator Tom Bradley said. "I have never seen a guy who handles himself the way he does in all situations. He's a remarkable person both on and off the field."

He was hurt in the fourth quarter of the Nittany Lions' 26-23 win over the Seminoles in the remarkable Orange Bowl game. As the blitzing Posluszny jumped at quarterback Drew Weatherford, tailback Lorenzo

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

defensively as a team and how well our season went. We played great defensively, which was a huge advantage for me.

"This year I want to repeat, but I want to earn it. When it's all said and done, I want to say I did everything I could to earn it."

Posluszny considered skipping his senior year to enter the NFL draft ... before the knee injury cemented his decision to return. He and cohorts Dan Connor and Tim Shaw return at linebacker, but Penn State lost its entire secondary and three-quarters of its defensive line from a unit that ranked in the top 20 in the nation in total defense, scoring defense, rushing defense and pass defense efficiency.

"Last season made us hungrier, really,

because now we feel like people are going to be expecting things from us," Posluszny said. "We finally got a taste of success. Now we know what that feeling is like. We want to do everything we can and work as hard as we can to keep that."

Working hard has never been a problem for Posluszny, a finance major who carries a 3.67 grade-point average, and whose intensity has become well known in the weight room and on the practice field.

While rehabilitating his knee in the off-season, he worked to strengthen his upper body and add bulk. He ate four or five meals a day, so his weight increased from 224 at the Orange Bowl to 238 in the spring. But his body fat dropped from 8 percent to 6.3.

"I feel great," he said.

"I've tried to eat a lot cleaner without fried foods or typical fast food. Grilled chicken, baked potato, rice ... my eating habits are really simple. To me, eating is just another part of training."

He also takes practice very seriously. Teammates often talk about Penn State's "light" practices — those with only helmets and shoulder pads — when Posluszny has plowed running backs or receivers into the ground.

"We're in half-contact drills and he comes flying through, taking off people's heads," said wide receiver Deon Butler. "He only has one gear and that's full speed. I'm glad I'm on his team."

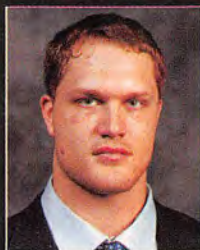
DEFENSE



Quentin Moses



Gaines Adams



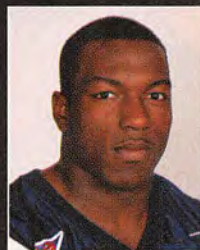
Adam Carriker



Brandon Mebane



Paul Posluszny



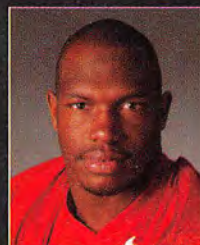
Patrick Willis

FIRST TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	Quentin Moses	6-5	250	Sr.	Georgia
DL	Gaines Adams	6-5	265	Sr.	Clemson
DL	Adam Carriker	6-6	280	Sr.	Nebraska
DL	Brandon Mebane	6-3	306	Sr.	Cal
LB	Paul Posluszny	6-2	229	Sr.	Penn State
LB	Patrick Willis	6-2	230	Sr.	Ole Miss
LB	Rufus Alexander	6-1	231	Sr.	Oklahoma
DB	Leon Hall	5-11	194	Sr.	Michigan
DB	Darrelle Revis	6-0	190	Jr.	Pittsburgh
DB	LaRon Landry	6-2	204	Sr.	LSU
DB	B. Meriweather	6-0	188	Sr.	Miami
P	Ken DeBauche	6-2	221	Jr.	Wisconsin

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	Dan Bazuin	6-3	269	Sr.	C. Michigan
DL	Lawrence Jackson	6-5	265	Jr.	USC
DL	Marcus Thomas	6-3	290	Sr.	Florida
DL	Jay Alford	6-5	288	Sr.	Penn State
LB	Vince Hall	6-0	236	Jr.	Virginia Tech
LB	H.B. Blades	6-0	240	Sr.	Pittsburgh
LB	Brandon Siler	6-2	235	Jr.	Florida
DB	David Irons	5-11	188	Sr.	Auburn
DB	Daymeion Hughes	6-2	188	Sr.	Cal
DB	Michael Griffin	6-0	205	Sr.	Texas
DB	Tom Zbikowski	6-0	208	Sr.	Notre Dame
P	Kody Bliss	5-10	177	Sr.	Auburn



Rufus Alexander



Leon Hall



Darrelle Revis



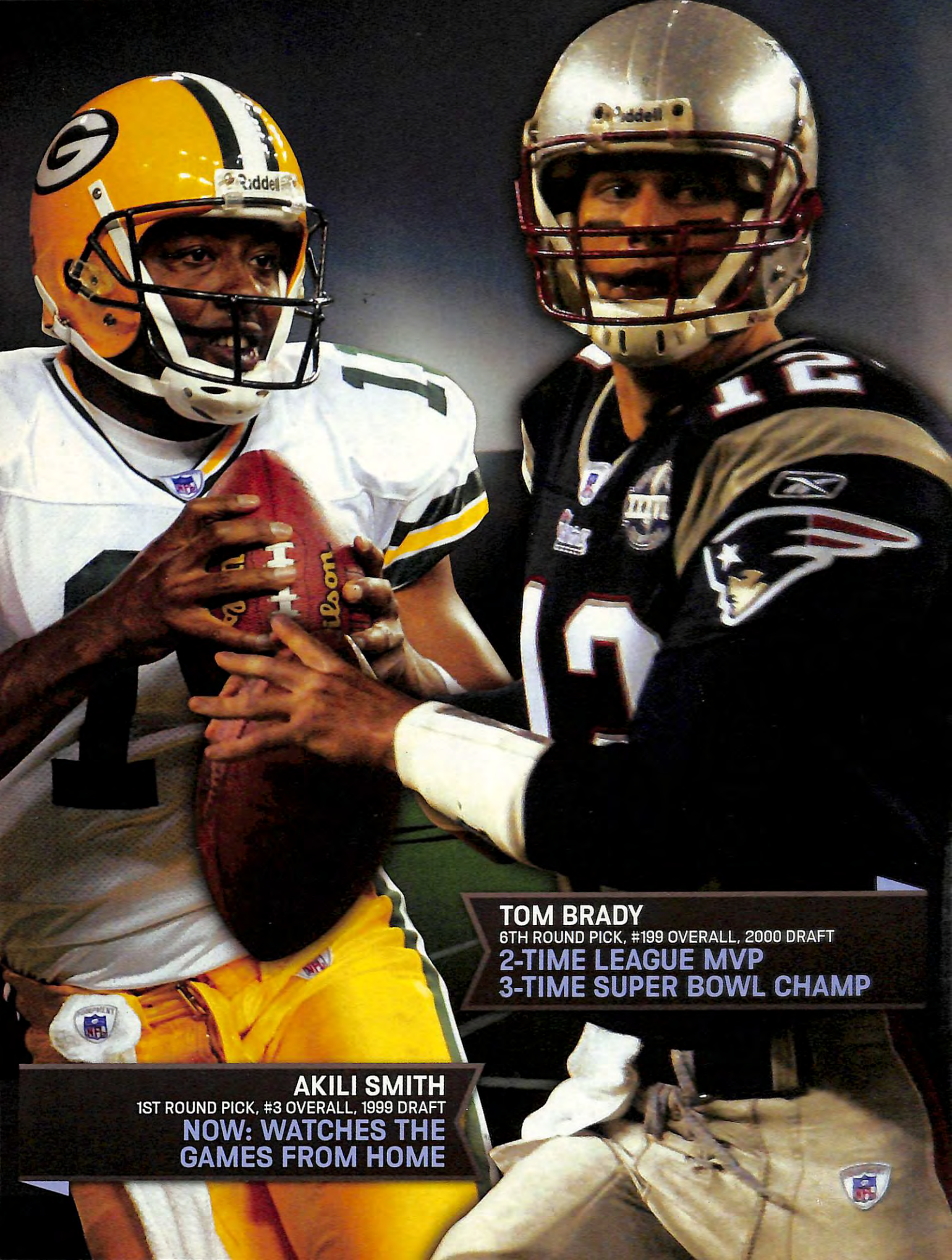
LaRon Landry



Brandon Meriweather



Ken DeBauche



TOM BRADY

6TH ROUND PICK, #199 OVERALL, 2000 DRAFT

2-TIME LEAGUE MVP

3-TIME SUPER BOWL CHAMP

AKILI SMITH

1ST ROUND PICK, #3 OVERALL, 1999 DRAFT

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PLAYER RATINGS

QUARTERBACKS

Clear Blue Skies Give Smith Visions of Buckeye Heaven

The flowers smelled the same and the blossoms looked like they do every spring in Columbus, Ohio. But to Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith, the environment was positively glistening with opportunity and anticipation like never before.

For the first time in his career, Smith isn't fighting either a position battle or an off-field tempest of his own creation.

Instead, he's sailing toward a senior season as the unquestioned leader of the Buckeyes and what he'd like to think will become a replication of the fairy tale 2005 season of Vince Young and the Texas Longhorns.

"Vince's story is like a dream come true," Smith said of his friend, who wore No. 10 at Texas. "He battled early in his career and finished out on top — on the highest of highs.

"But I wear the No. 10 jersey for Ohio State, so I'm totally different. This is a totally different setting than down there in Austin, and I approach it a different way. This is my story. This is my legacy that I have to leave."

OSU receiver Anthony Gonzalez has no doubt Smith will author his finish with a flourish.

"I'll be shocked if Troy doesn't have a fantastic senior year," Gonzalez said. "He's playing so well and with so much confidence. I think what he'll do this season will be even better than what he's

done in the past — and what he's already done has been pretty spectacular."

It has, not only on the field, but in light of what Smith has overcome.

Ohio State labeled him an "athlete," upon adding him as the last member of its 2002 recruiting class.

That group also included Ohio's prep football record-holder for career passing yards in Justin Zwick.

Zwick's brother, Jared, had played quarterback for OSU coach Jim Tressel, and there was little doubt Justin would follow in that line once Craig Krenzel left for the NFL following the 2003 season.

Zwick indeed won the quarterback job to start 2004, but a mid-season injury after three straight losses opened a spot for Smith.

He didn't disappoint, leading the Buckeyes to a 4-1 finish, including a 37-21 upset of Michigan in which Smith accounted for 386 offensive yards — the most ever in the OSU-Michigan series.

Smith didn't get to play in the Alamo Bowl that followed, however, because his acceptance of a \$500 cash payment from a booster before the 2004 season came to light that December.

The resultant two-game NCAA suspension marked Smith's second misstep off the field.

As a redshirt freshman in 2003, he had been convicted of disorderly conduct after an incident the week of the OSU-Michigan game.

Those off-field transgressions brought what Smith labels "a real heart-to-heart" with Tressel when he named Smith the starter after the Buckeyes' 25-22 loss to Texas.

"There's no room for any more (mistakes)," Smith recalls as the cautionary advice of his coach. "If you get another ... it's done. It's over."

Tressel instituted mandatory Tuesday film sessions for Smith after that, and the study paid off in another outstanding finish.

He led OSU to nine wins in the 10 games he started, including seven in a row to end the season, which landed OSU No. 4 in the final rankings.

Against Michigan, Smith was again at his best, rallying the Buckeyes from a 21-12 fourth-quarter deficit to a 25-21 win in the last 7:49.

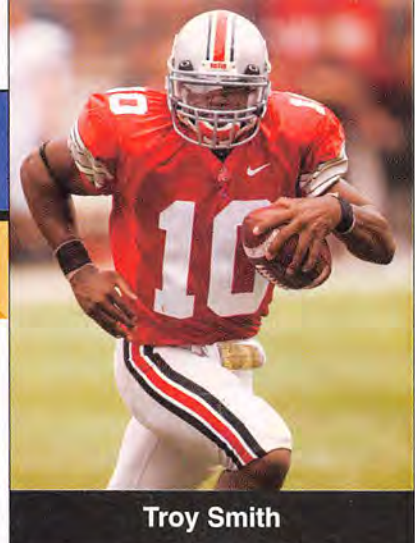
He sparked the comeback on a third-and-10 play by scrambling for 14 yards, and he sealed the outcome by dancing away from pressure to complete a pass inside the Michigan 5-yard line.

Smith made the same sort of plays in a 34-20 rout of Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl, breaking the Fighting Irish with nifty runs that converted key third downs on each of OSU's five scoring drives.

The Buckeyes' 617-yard performance that night in Tempe was the most yardage ever allowed by Notre Dame, and ranks as reason No. 1 why many favor Ohio State to return to the Valley of the Sun for this season's BCS championship game.

"This is Troy's team," Gonzalez said. "Anyone who has seen us in the past ought to know that."

— Jason Steele



Troy Smith

TOP QUARTERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Brady Quinn	Sr.	Notre Dame
2.	Troy Smith	Sr.	Ohio State
3.	Drew Stanton	Sr.	Michigan State
4.	Chris Leak	Sr.	Florida
5.	Brian Brohm	Jr.	Louisville
6.	Sam Keller	Sr.	Arizona State
7.	Chad Henne	Jr.	Michigan
8.	Drew Tate	Sr.	Iowa
9.	Pat White	So.	West Virginia
10.	Jordan Palmer	Sr.	UTEP
11.	John Beck	Sr.	BYU
12.	Colt Brennan	Jr.	Hawaii
13.	JaMarcus Russell	Jr.	LSU
14.	John Stocco	Sr.	Wisconsin
15.	Tyler Palko	Sr.	Pittsburgh
16.	Bret Meyer	Jr.	Iowa State
17.	Drew Weatherford	So.	Florida State
18.	Trent Edwards	Sr.	Stanford
19.	Rudy Carpenter	So.	Arizona State
20.	Kyle Wright	Jr.	Miami
21.	Jared Zabransky	Sr.	Boise State
22.	Paul Smith	Jr.	Tulsa
23.	Bryan Cupito	Sr.	Minnesota
24.	Kevin Kolb	Sr.	Houston
25.	Jeff Rowe	Sr.	Nevada

Not rated due to injury: Brian Johnson, Utah

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PLAYER RATINGS

RUNNING BACKS

Watch Out World: Oklahoma's Peterson Getting 'A Lot Better'



Adrian Peterson

If practice makes perfect, it's scary how imperfectly impressive junior running back Adrian Peterson has been his first two seasons at Oklahoma.

As good as Peterson has been with the Sooners — and he's been plenty good — he could be much better.

In 2004, Peterson was the first freshman to finish runner-up in Heisman Trophy balloting, rushing for 1,925 yards and 15 touchdowns while helping OU to the national championship game.

In 2005, he rushed for 1,108 yards and 14 touchdowns and became the first running back in the program's storied history to rush for 3,000 yards his first two seasons.

Imagine the possibilities had Peterson not missed two full weeks of practice, which included several two-a-day sessions, before his freshman season ... and not missed all of 2005 spring practice after undergoing shoulder surgery ... and not missed parts of four games last season due to a high ankle sprain and a nagging Achilles' tendon strain.

Throw into the mix the wear and tear of an astounding 559

carries in his first two seasons, which included a national freshman record of 339.

Peterson has been beat up, but not beaten down. His attitude, desire and commitment have been unwavering.

"He works hard — very hard," Sooners coach Bob Stoops said.

Peterson packs some crazy skills into his 6-2, 218-pound frame, but there are flaws.

"He's young and he's talented, but he's not a great player yet," OU offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson said. "There's still an upside to where Adrian can be."

Wilson wants Peterson playing better without the football — blocking, picking up blitzes, running pass routes, better overall field awareness. There's also room for improvement with the ball — setting up blockers, pacing runs rather than everything being an all-out sprint.

"Sometimes he's so fast, he runs into trouble," Wilson said.

Peterson knows: "There's footwork, pass blocking, a lot of little things I catch on film I can improve at to improve me as a player."

In the spring, Peterson donned the "hands-off" blue jersey in practice. It's the same wardrobe worn by quarterbacks, which prohibits teammates from making contact.

"I've always made fun of the quarterbacks. Now I've joined the gang," Peterson said. "I understand that it's all for the best. I still don't like it."

The process helped Peterson stay thoroughly healthy while going through his spring paces — the first time he was uninterrupted in offseason practice. The repetitions he gained had coaches smiling.

"The more anybody sees something, the better you are at countering it, or working with it, or playing against it," Stoops said. "The more you see something, the better you're going to be."

Coaches and players agree Peterson made his greatest improvement in the spring.

"Great practice players have a chance to become great players," Wilson said. "We're not trying to put Adrian down. We're just trying to tell him, 'Look how good you can be.' We've hit him with that hard, and quite honestly he practiced really good. He bought into it."

Wilson shakes his head at Peterson's potential.

"Adrian's a phenomenal talent," Wilson said. "He's had a nice career. As good as he is, he still can be a lot better than what we've seen."

These are reasons why Peterson is among the favorites to win this year's Heisman Trophy. These also are reasons why many believe this likely is Peterson's final season of amateur ball.

But Peterson hasn't written off a senior season with the Sooners. "Anything can happen, injuries or whatever — God's will they won't," Peterson said. "I could see myself being here. I ain't even really been thinking about that. Plus, we're playing Miami (Sept. 8, 2007). I'm looking forward to playing Miami, too."

— John Rohde

TOP RUNNING BACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Adrian Peterson	Jr.	Oklahoma
2.	Marshawn Lynch	Jr.	Cal
3.	Kenny Irons	Sr.	Auburn
4.	Michael Bush	Sr.	Louisville
5.	Darren McFadden	So.	Arkansas
6.	Garrett Wolfe	Sr.	Northern Illinois
7.	Brian Leonard	Sr.	Rutgers
8.	Steve Slaton	So.	West Virginia
9.	Michael Hart	Jr.	Michigan
10.	Kenneth Darby	Sr.	Alabama
11.	Tyrell Sutton	So.	Northwestern
12.	Albert Young	Jr.	Iowa
13.	Jamaal Charles	So.	Texas
14.	Lorenzo Booker	Sr.	Florida State
15.	Yvenson Bernard	Jr.	Oregon State
16.	Darius Walker	Jr.	Notre Dame
17.	Thomas Brown	Jr.	Georgia
18.	Antonio Pittman	Jr.	Ohio State
19.	James Davis	So.	Clemson
20.	Arian Foster	So.	Tennessee
21.	Keegan Herring	So.	Arizona State
22.	Jamario Thomas	Jr.	North Texas
23.	Tony Hunt	Sr.	Penn State
24.	Courtney Lewis	Sr.	Texas A&M
25.	Cory Boyd	Sr.	South Carolina

Not rated due to injury: Alley Broussard, LSU; Tyrone Moss, Miami; Justin Vincent, LSU

PLAYER RATINGS

RECEIVERS



PHOTO BY BOB LEVERONE/SPORTING NEWS

Dwayne Jarrett

'Routine' Catch Turned Jarrett into Another SoCal Celeb

USC wide receiver Dwayne Jarrett figured his life changed after The Catch, but he didn't really know until he walked into a Hollywood club three days after his 61-yard reception on fourth-and-9 against Notre Dame.

By the time he got back from South Bend, everyone knew Jarrett scratched his cornea and experienced double vision on the big play. He saw two footballs coming at him and fortunately for the Trojans, grabbed the right one.

But the impact really hit the sophomore when he quietly strolled into a club amid celebrities like Paris Hilton, Shannen Doherty and Matthew Perry. Instead of being a shy, anonymous stargazer, he was the one being approached by them.

"I don't like talking about football, I change the subject," Jarrett said.

"Everybody was asking about it. I love the game, but so many people and celebrities and fans came up to me. I guess I'd rather be known as the guy who caught the ball than the guy who dropped it."

Jarrett did a lot more than make one play to become a consensus All-American and one of three finalists for the Biletnikoff Award last season. He led USC with 91 receptions for 1,274 yards and 16 touchdowns.

"Reminiscent of Mike Williams, huh?" said Trojans defensive tackle Sedrick Ellis, making an appropriate comparison to the former USC All-American.

Jarrett's 29 career touchdown catches in two seasons are just one shy of USC's record held by Williams, who plays for the Detroit Lions.

Those gaudy numbers are least surprising to Jarrett's teammates. For most of them, it just seemed like quarterback Matt Leinart always threw to Jarrett.

"DJ was the guy we used to expose weaknesses," McFoy said. "It depended on the scheme or game plan."

But last year is over. What does Jarrett do for an encore? He won't have Leinart to throw passes or tailbacks Reggie Bush or LenDale White to worry defenses anymore.

Jarrett, though, said he is worried "not at all."

"Mark Sanchez and John David Booty are fine — they're both great," he said of the new quarterbacks. "I have confidence in them. A lot of people had doubts when Matt replaced Carson Palmer too."

Maybe Jarrett sounds carefree because of his ability to get open. Although he doesn't possess blazing speed, his size (6-5) and jumping ability allow him to simply out-leap cornerbacks, and he has the body control to outmaneuver them in the air ... and the hands to make it all work. His other advantage is a loping stride that makes him dangerous once he gets going downfield.

"It's hard for a person to catch up," Jarrett said. "A lot of guys are quick but not as fast because of my stride."

But to the average fan, it's all about The Catch. Jarrett routinely gets congratulated for the play, even during spring practices. But those around USC were least impressed by his signature moment.

Sophomore wide receiver Patrick Turner, considered by some the next Jarrett because he's also 6-5, said the catch was nothing out of the ordinary.

"That's every day if you come to practice," Turner said.

USC coach Pete Carroll went even further with his praise.

"That was routine (for him)," Carroll said. "I always thought Cris Carter was the greatest catcher there ever was. Nobody has anything on this guy (Jarrett)."

All the hype and praise makes Jarrett more determined to fit in with his teammates this season.

"I like the role of just being a part of the team," Jarrett said. "All that other stuff people say just makes me more focused to play harder and be a leader when I can."

— Scott Wolf

TOP WIDE RECEIVERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Dwayne Jarrett	Jr.	USC
2.	Calvin Johnson	Jr.	Georgia Tech
3.	Jeff Samardzija	Sr.	Notre Dame
4.	Sidney Rice	So.	South Carolina
5.	Jason Hill	Sr.	Washington State
6.	Jarrett Hicks	Sr.	Texas Tech
7.	Andre Caldwell	Sr.	Florida
8.	Aundrae Allison	Sr.	East Carolina
9.	Todd Blythe	Jr.	Iowa State
10.	James Hardy	So.	Indiana
11.	Steve Smith	Sr.	USC
12.	Mario Urrutia	So.	Louisville
13.	Dorien Bryant	Jr.	Purdue
14.	Greg Carr	So.	Florida State
15.	Vincent Marshall	Sr.	Houston
16.	Chansi Stuckey	Sr.	Clemson
17.	Joel Filani	Sr.	Texas Tech
18.	Dwayne Bowe	Sr.	LSU
19.	Davone Bess	So.	Hawaii
20.	Earl Bennett	So.	Vanderbilt
21.	Dallas Baker	Sr.	Florida
22.	Mario Manningham	So.	Michigan
23.	D'Juan Woods	Sr.	Oklahoma State
24.	Paul Williams	Sr.	Fresno State
25.	Courtney Taylor	Sr.	Auburn

TOP TIGHT ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Clark Harris	Sr.	Rutgers
2.	Zach Miller	Jr.	Arizona State
3.	Matt Spaeth	Sr.	Minnesota
4.	Greg Olsen	Jr.	Miami
5.	Martin Rucker	Jr.	Missouri
6.	Jonny Harline	Sr.	BYU
7.	Scott Chandler	Sr.	Iowa
8.	Joe Newton	Sr.	Oregon State
9.	Shawn Nelson	So.	Southern Miss
10.	Dan Murray	Sr.	UConn

Not rated due to injury: Matt Herian, Nebraska

PLAYER RATINGS

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Road Grader Blalock Paves Way for National Champs

For being an All-American football player on the national championship team, Justin Blalock doesn't have much trouble going out in public in Austin.

He isn't exactly swarmed with autograph seekers and gladhanders, perpetually pestered by paparazzi.

You'd think he would be.

Blalock is, after all, the best returning player for the defending national champion Texas Longhorns. But, of course, he's also an offensive tackle.



Justin Blalock

PHOTO BY JOHN WILLIAMSON

"That's just the way it is as a lineman," said Blalock, a 6-4, 329-pound senior right tackle. "I didn't get into this for the glory. Or else I'd be a quarterback."

The otherwise star-struck citizens of Austin might not have noticed Blalock yet. The defensive linemen of the Big 12 — not to mention NFL scouts everywhere — certainly give him the attention he deserves.

Blalock, an All-American candidate with an almost sure professional future, was an integral part of a line that paved the way for a record-setting Texas offense last season. The Longhorns set school marks by averaging 50 points and 512 yards a game, and then capped it off with their stunning Rose Bowl victory over Southern California.

Blalock's coaches talk of him as a technician, a perfectionist with a ballerina's obsession with footwork. His teammates laughingly call him, "The Dancing Bear."

Texas coach Mack Brown calls him something else entirely.

"We think he can be as good as any lineman in the country this year," Brown said. "He just road grades people."

And he's been doing it for going on four years now.

Blalock earned a starting job as a redshirt freshman in 2003 and hasn't come out of the lineup since. He has started 38 consecutive games at right tackle, the longest active string of any player on the Texas roster.

Over the years, Blalock has come to learn a fascinating lesson when it comes to the art of playing offensive line.

"It's not just a bunch of big uglies bumping into each other," said Blalock, a two-time first-team All-Big 12 pick.

There is a science to it, he says.

Blalock spends ample time in the film room, studying not only his own tendencies but those of opposing defensive linemen.

He describes his playing style as, "always thinking on my feet."

Blalock often makes it a point to know not only his own blocking assignments, but those of his fellow linemen. That came in handy over the offseason, as Blalock worked to add another line to his job description.

During spring and summer drills, Blalock toggled between tackle and right guard, a position he hadn't played since high school.

Texas coaches hope Blalock can at least provide some depth and versatility for an offensive line looking to replace two starters.

Blalock, with an eye toward the NFL, certainly doesn't mind padding his resume with work at a second position.

"It never hurts to add to the repertoire of skills at your disposal," Blalock said. "It can only help."

Not that many Texas fans will notice Blalock's hard work.

Fans will always talk about Vince Young's winning touchdown run in the Rose Bowl. But do any of them remember who leveled a defender for the key block on that scramble?

It was Blalock, laying out a blitzing USC safety, springing Young for his run to immortality. Young became a legend. Blalock remains anonymous.

Just the way he likes it.

— Jeff McDonald

TOP CENTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Dan Mozes	Sr.	West Virginia
2.	Ryan Kalil	Sr.	USC
3.	Kyle Young	Sr.	Fresno State
4.	Lyle Sendlein	Sr.	Texas
5.	Mark Fenton	Sr.	Colorado
6.	Samson Satele	Sr.	Hawaii
7.	Doug Datish	Sr.	Ohio State
8.	Dustin Fry	Sr.	Clemson
9.	Cedric Gagne-Marcoux	Sr.	Central Florida
10.	John Sullivan	Sr.	Notre Dame

TOP GUARDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Kasey Studdard	Sr.	Texas
2.	Will Arnold	Jr.	LSU
3.	Tim Duckworth	Sr.	Auburn
4.	Jordan Grimes	Jr.	Purdue
5.	Mike Jones	Sr.	Iowa
6.	Josh Beekman	Sr.	Boston College
7.	Manuel Ramirez	Sr.	Texas Tech
8.	Roman Fry	Sr.	Clemson
9.	George Batiste	Sr.	Southern Miss
10.	Ben Grubbs	Sr.	Auburn

TOP TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Justin Blalock	Sr.	Texas
2.	Sam Baker	Jr.	USC
3.	Levi Brown	Sr.	Penn State
4.	Arron Sears	Sr.	Tennessee
5.	Joe Thomas	Sr.	Wisconsin
6.	Jake Long	Sr.	Michigan
7.	Ryan Harris	Sr.	Notre Dame
8.	Doug Free	Sr.	Northern Illinois
9.	Mike Otto	Sr.	Purdue
10.	Daniel Inman	Sr.	Georgia
11.	Corey Hilliard	Sr.	Oklahoma State
12.	Barry Richardson	Jr.	Clemson
13.	Herb Taylor	Sr.	TCU
14.	Steve Vallos	Sr.	Wake Forest
15.	Brian Stamper	Sr.	Vanderbilt

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PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

High-impact Moses Ready to Accept Higher Georgia Profile

Yes, it's his turn now. Quentin Moses had become accustomed to waiting his turn.

At Georgia, the lead Dawg on defense has been a succession of high-impact, high-profile guys. Players like David Pollack, Thomas Davis, Odell Thurman, Richard Seymour, Marcus Stroud ... following in a long line of big-timers. And against that kind of

backdrop, Moses was entirely comfortable just doing his job.

"I've always considered myself a role player," he said.

OK, but now, whether he expected this kind of attention or not, it's his time to become the high-profile, high-impact player.

First-team preseason All-American, leader of a nasty pack of Bulldogs, and one with good potential for the 2007 NFL Draft ... Moses still is somewhat mystified by the swelling of attention.

"Even going into last season, those 'watch lists' caught me off guard because I hadn't done anything," he said. "Hearing all that, I guess it can be good and bad. I like the idea of having to prove something to everybody and sneaking up on people."

Moses paused, then added with continued bewilderment, "It almost feels kind of funny to have my name mentioned with the top people in the country. It's different for me. I've never experienced it."

With Pollack garnering most of the attention, Moses did somewhat sneak up on people his first two seasons. He had nine sacks and 25 quarterback pressures his freshman and sophomore seasons.

"Even when Pollack got all the attention," said Georgia head coach Mark Richt, "Quentin was making his share of the plays."

The very bright and personable Moses made the SEC Academic Honor Roll. And, following Pollack's lead, he clearly showed he understood the value of hard work.

Moses worked harder than ever this past offseason.

"I'm a competitor, man," Moses said. "Growing up, I wanted to be a professional athlete. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. Most people don't even get the opportunity."

Moses should finally realize his dream — next year.

Moses recalled the first time the subject of skipping his senior year at Georgia ever came up. He says it was almost as though he should look over each shoulder and ask, "Are you talking to me?"

"A reporter asked me if I was going to enter the draft," Moses said. "I had never even thought about it until he asked me."

It was a logical question. After waiting his turn behind Pollack and veteran Will Thompson, Moses enjoyed a breakthrough junior season in 2005. He led the Bulldogs with 11.5 sacks. And at 6-foot-5, 250 pounds with a quick first step, Moses possesses the pass rushing skills NFL scouts find hard to come by.

So Moses did file a request with the NFL to assess his draft status, more out of curiosity than anything. The projection: third or fourth round.

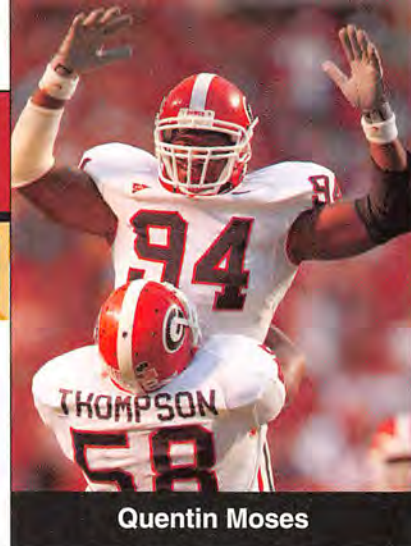
Moses' reply to the NFL: See you next year.

"I definitely don't feel like I'm the best player I can be," Moses said.

Georgia's Sugar Bowl loss to West Virginia still eats at him.

"I wanted to try to do the best I can for myself," he said. "But I didn't like the way the season ended, going out on a bad note. You never get that senior year back. I wanted to experience it."

— Guerry Clegg



Quentin Moses

TOP DEFENSIVE ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Quentin Moses	Sr.	Georgia
2.	Gaines Adams	Sr.	Clemson
3.	Adam Carriker	Sr.	Nebraska
4.	Dan Bazuin	Sr.	Central Michigan
5.	Lawrence Jackson	Jr.	USC
6.	Tim Crowder	Sr.	Texas
7.	Larry Birdine	Sr.	Oklahoma
8.	Victor Abiamiri	Sr.	Notre Dame
9.	Mkristo Bruce	Sr.	Washington State
10.	Calvin Thibodeaux	Sr.	Oklahoma
11.	Brian Smith	Sr.	Missouri
12.	Quentin Groves	Jr.	Auburn
13.	Larry McSwain	Sr.	UAB
14.	Baraka Atkins	Sr.	Miami
15.	Kenny Iwebema	Jr.	Iowa
16.	Anthony Spencer	Sr.	Purdue
17.	Tommy Blake	Jr.	TCU
18.	Chris Ellis	Jr.	Virginia Tech
19.	Michael Heard	Sr.	Mississippi State
20.	C.J. Ah You	Sr.	Oklahoma

Not rated due to injury: Loren Howard, Arizona State

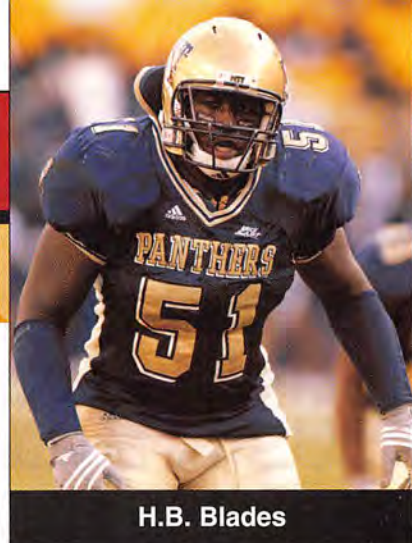
TOP DEFENSIVE TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Brandon Mebane	Sr.	Cal
2.	Marcus Thomas	Sr.	Florida
3.	Jay Alford	Sr.	Penn State
4.	Justin Harrell	Sr.	Tennessee
5.	Quinn Pitcock	Sr.	Ohio State
6.	Sedrick Ellis	Jr.	USC
7.	Brent Curvey	Sr.	Iowa State
8.	Derek Landri	Sr.	Notre Dame
9.	Frank Okam	Jr.	Texas
10.	Rhema Fuller	Sr.	UConn
11.	Keilen Dykes	Jr.	West Virginia
12.	Mitch King	So.	Iowa
13.	Nick Hayden	Jr.	Wisconsin
14.	Joe Anoai	Sr.	Georgia Tech
15.	Keith Jackson	Sr.	Arkansas
16.	Kareem Brown	Sr.	Miami
17.	Ramel Meekins	Sr.	Rutgers
18.	Trevor Laws	Sr.	Notre Dame
19.	Glen Dorsey	Jr.	LSU
20.	Ray McDonald	Sr.	Florida

PLAYER RATINGS

LINEBACKERS

Blades Cuts His Own Path; Success More Than Genes



H.B. Blades

The "U." was all H.B. Blades ever knew as a child in Plantation, Fla. It was his destiny, to be a football star for the Miami Hurricanes, just like his dad and just like his uncles. But Blades wanted something — to make his own name — that he could only attain if he went against the family tradition. That's why, on the advice of his favorite uncle, the late Al Blades, he looked elsewhere when choosing where to play college football.

He initially committed to Michigan ... but he wasn't completely comfortable with that, so he kept looking. He decided on the University of Pittsburgh, a good compromise because the Panthers played in the same conference as Miami (at the time).

"(Former Florida coach) Ron Zook came and visited me when I was in high school and as soon as he left, my dad and uncles were like 'absolutely not,'" Blades said.

"It was made clear if I wasn't going to the U — and that wasn't an option at first — I'd have to leave the state of Florida. Pitt was one of the schools I was familiar with because they did play Miami and I also knew I could make an impact here, I could lead this program to the top."

Blades certainly has made a name for himself at Pitt, which won the Big East in 2004 but suffered through a losing record last season.

Blades, entering his third season as the starting middle linebacker, is clearly the Panthers leader on defense. He led the Big East with 121 tackles last season and is aiming to become the Panthers' first three-time first-team All-Big East selection.

"H.B. is going to show up to play every day; that's just who he is and how he was raised," coach Dave Wannstedt said.

Blades' father Bennie was an All-American defensive back for the Hurricanes from 1984-87. H.B. Blades' uncle, Brian, was a receiver for the Hurricanes during that same era.

Wannstedt, who coached Bennie as a defensive coordinator at Miami, said father and son share many traits.

"H.B. is a lot like his dad in that he has a great feel for the game," Wannstedt said.

"He just knows where he's supposed to be on every play. He's not the biggest linebacker, he's not the fastest linebacker, but he makes more plays than anyone I've seen. It is because he's deceptively fast and because he's so smart, he plays a lot faster than most guys. He just has a nose for the ball."

Blades said his father and his uncle Brian gave him a good base of football knowledge, but he said Al, who played for the Hurricanes from 1996-2000, was his closest mentor.

Al and H.B. shared a room while they were growing up at their grandparent's house in Plantation, and Al taught H.B. how to play football in the backyard. They worked out together every day, and H.B. described Al as "a big brother," which is why it was so difficult for him to handle Al's death in a car accident in March 1993.

H.B. carries Al's spirit with him, as well as the family legacy, every time he hits the field. But he said anybody who believes he is merely a product of good genes doesn't understand his work ethic, or the work ethic that so defines his family.

"A lot of football players have sons that can't play," Blades said. "I'm here because I worked hard, because my family pushed me to be the best I can be. You can't accomplish anything without hard work, without persevering, I don't care who you are related to."

— Paul Zeise

TOP INSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Patrick Willis	Sr.	Ole Miss
2.	H.B. Blades	Sr.	Pittsburgh
3.	Brandon Siler	Jr.	Florida
4.	Desmond Bishop	Sr.	Cal
5.	Thaddeus Washington	Sr.	Colorado
6.	Corey McKeon	Jr.	Nebraska
7.	Anthony Waters	Sr.	Clemson
8.	Kevin McLee	Sr.	West Virginia
9.	Justin Warren	Sr.	Texas A&M
10.	Jarvis Jackson	Sr.	Georgia
11.	Oscar Lua	Sr.	USC
12.	Quinton Culberson	Sr.	Mississippi State
13.	Jon Abbate	Jr.	Wake Forest
14.	Korey Hall	Sr.	Boise State
15.	Buster Davis	Sr.	Florida State
16.	Matt Muncy	Sr.	Ohio
17.	Nick Bunting	Sr.	Tulsa
18.	Kelvin Smith	Sr.	Syracuse
19.	Rob Caldwell	Sr.	Navy
20.	Ben Moffitt	Jr.	South Florida

TOP OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Paul Posluszny	Sr.	Penn State
2.	Rufus Alexander	Sr.	Oklahoma
3.	Vince Hall	Jr.	Virginia Tech
4.	LaMarr Woodley	Sr.	Michigan
5.	Sam Olajubutu	Sr.	Arkansas
6.	Earl Everett	Sr.	Florida
7.	Keith Rivers	Jr.	USC
8.	Tony Taylor	Sr.	Georgia
9.	Will Herring	Sr.	Auburn
10.	Robert Killebrew	Jr.	Texas
11.	Keyunta Dawson	Sr.	Texas Tech
12.	Ali Highsmith	Jr.	LSU
13.	Brian Toal	Jr.	Boston College
14.	Juwan Simpson	Sr.	Alabama
15.	Stephen Nicholas	Sr.	South Florida
16.	Dan Connor	Sr.	Penn State
17.	Jeremy Jones	Sr.	UTEP
18.	KaMichael Hall	Sr.	Georgia Tech
19.	Xavier Adibi	Jr.	Virginia Tech
20.	Mike Alston	Sr.	Toledo

PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

There's a Lott of Big Hits in LSU's Long-Lasting Landry

The fifth game of LSU's 2003 season has become lost amid all the hoopla surrounding the Tigers' Bowl Championship Series national title that year.

Now that LaRon Landry is a senior and a *Lindy's* Preseason All-American free safety, it bears reviewing.

Landry made his starting debut in that game, providing a glimpse of the greatness to come: 11 tackles, a quarterback hurry

and a blocked field goal. All that went a

long way toward helping LSU smack Mississippi State, 41-6.

"I gave it my best," Landry said of the effort. "I haven't left the field since then."

With good reason. Landry has become a cornerstone of the LSU defense, which ranked third nationally last year under first-year coordinator Bo Pelini.

Landry has made 35 consecutive starts, including 33 at free safety, where he was moved after having started at cornerback and strong safety.

Landry's home has given him the freedom to roam in a secondary that also features senior strong safety Jessie Daniels, who has 25 career starts. They form a bone-jarring tandem.

"I like being aggressive," said the 6-2, 204-pound Landry. "I like going to the ball and hitting people."

It's small wonder Landry says he patterns his style of play after Ronnie Lott, who exemplified those qualities during his Hall of Fame career with the San Francisco 49ers.

Landry led LSU in tackles in each of his first two years, and became the first freshman to do so since 1990. His 69 stops last year tied for third.

The decrease in his tackle statistics wasn't so much a decline in production as it was a reflection of Pelini's philosophy and a veteran line that has since graduated most of its members.

The numbers notwithstanding, Landry was more valuable than ever. He led the team with three interceptions and was chosen first-team All-SEC and a second-team All-American.

Landry, who has 241 career stops, has no intention of letting up, although he said he must be careful to avoid "competing with myself" by measuring what he does against previous accomplishments. Those include 12.5 career tackles for losses, seven sacks and nine interceptions.

Landry's devotion to improvement can be seen in his decision to forego an early exit to the NFL. He toyed with the idea before announcing his return.

"I'm thrilled," LSU coach Les Miles said when he learned of Landry's commitment.

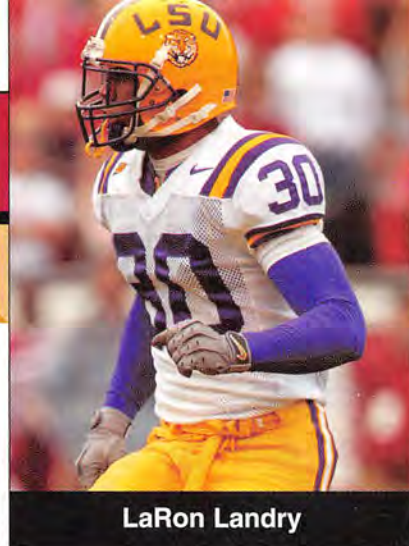
"LaRon is a player that brings a great deal to our football team in terms of his ability on the field, but he's also a guy who is a leader and someone that other players on the team look up to. This is certainly exciting."

The low-key Landry has become much more demonstrative since those early days when then-head coach Nick Saban and then-defensive coordinator Will Muschamp implored Landry to become more vocal in the defensive backfield.

"LaRon is a great football player," said Dallas Cowboys defensive end Marcus Spears, one of Landry's former teammates. "(LSU's defense) puts him in great situations to make plays, and he's able to do it."

Again and again.

— Dave Moorman



LaRon Landry

PHOTO BY JOHN WILLIAMSON

TOP CORNERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Leon Hall	Sr.	Michigan
2.	Darrelle Revis	Jr.	Pittsburgh
3.	David Irons	Sr.	Auburn
4.	Daymeion Hughes	Sr.	Cal
5.	John Talley	Sr.	Duke
6.	Antoine Cason	Jr.	Arizona
7.	Marquice Cole	Sr.	Northwestern
8.	Fred Bennett	Sr.	South Carolina
9.	Tanard Jackson	Sr.	Syracuse
10.	Malcolm Jenkins	So.	Ohio State
11.	C.J. Wilson	Sr.	Baylor
12.	Mike Jenkins	Jr.	South Florida
13.	Tony Carter	So.	Florida State
14.	Alphonso Smith	So.	Wake Forest
15.	Joe Garcia	Sr.	Nevada
16.	Marcus Hamilton	Sr.	Virginia
17.	Marcus McCauley	Sr.	Fresno State
18.	Mike Mickens	So.	Cincinnati
19.	Aqib Talib	So.	Kansas
20.	Tim Mixon	Sr.	Cal

TOP SAFETIES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	LaRon Landry	Sr.	LSU
2.	Brandon Meriweather	Sr.	Miami
3.	Michael Griffin	Sr.	Texas
4.	Tom Zbikowski	Sr.	Notre Dame
5.	Eric Weddle	Sr.	Utah
6.	Wesley Smith	Sr.	Memphis
7.	J.D. Nelson	Sr.	Oregon
8.	Reggie Nelson	Jr.	Florida
9.	David Overstreet	Sr.	Missouri
10.	Jessie Daniels	Sr.	LSU
11.	Sabby Piscatelli	Sr.	Oregon State
12.	Eric Wicks	Sr.	West Virginia
13.	Patrick Chung	So.	Oregon
14.	Michael Johnson	Sr.	Arizona
15.	Kenny Phillips	So.	Miami
16.	J.J. Billingsley	Sr.	Colorado
17.	Jeramie Johnson	Sr.	Mississippi State
18.	Jamie Silva	Jr.	Boston College
19.	Roderick Rogers	Sr.	Wisconsin
20.	Zach Catanese	Sr.	Arizona State

PLAYER RATINGS

ALL-PURPOSE

Michigan's All-Around Threat is Simply Poetry In Motion

Steve Breaston wasn't on the Michigan campus for long before his football teammates dubbed him "Special." "I love Steve," said Michigan tailback Mike Hart. "He can do a lot of things. He's a beast. He's a freak."

And now, he's a beastly freak who's also healthy.

There's always been a "wow" factor with Breaston's performance — offering the kind of thrill that belies the slender senior's reserved personality — dating to his days at Woodland Hills High School in the Pittsburgh area.

While at Woodland Hills, Breaston played with a superhero T-shirt under his uniform. Yet at Michigan, he's hardly been indestructible, coping with a series of nagging injuries the past two seasons.

First it was a stress fracture in his foot. Then a broken finger. Then a strained hamstring.



Steve Breaston

At the conclusion of practices in the spring, the 6-1, 182-pound Breaston declared himself as healthy as ever, ready to give all of his special abilities to a Michigan team trying to rebound from a 7-5 season.

"Last year, we really didn't have that much fun. But it's a new season," he said. "I want to erase the sour taste out of my mouth, enjoy football again."

Breaston speaks quietly, preferring to express his emotions on paper, where he pens poem upon poem, rarely about football.

On the field, though, his creativity churns in a way that any fan can appreciate. Breaston is capable of instant offense, whether it be on kick returns, punt returns, or as a wide receiver.

"He can score any time he touches the ball," Hart said.

During 2003, his redshirt freshman year, Breaston scored via reception, rush and punt return. What's more, he threw a touchdown pass to become the first Michigan player to accomplish that four-way scoring feat since 1949.

On one audacious play against Illinois in 2003, Breaston fielded a punt on the right sideline, froze a defender with a series of fakes, went left and curved to the opposite sideline before running 74 yards for a touchdown.

Since that year, when he set a school single-season record for punt return yardage, Breaston has continued to make memorable plays and make history.

In the Rose Bowl against Texas at the end of the 2004 season, he ripped through the Longhorns for 315 all-purpose yards, breaking the game's previous standard set more than three decades earlier by O.J. Simpson.

Michigan's most recent bowl game, last December against Nebraska, again turned into showtime. Breaston set a new Alamo Bowl record with 224 all-purpose yards in a tight Michigan loss.

Although Breaston already has joined former Wisconsin Badger Nick Davis as the only Big Ten players to top 1,000 career yards in three categories — punt returns, kickoff returns and receiving — he's certain to add to his legacy.

Breaston, who owns Michigan's career punt return record, is less than 100 yards from overtaking Anthony Carter for the kick return mark. But as a wide receiver, Breaston is still searching for a consistent starring role for the Wolverines, who need someone to extend their excellence at that position.

For the past eight seasons, the Wolverines have featured a 1,000-yard receiver, most recently Jason Avant. But after the now-graduated Avant, who caught 82 passes for 1,007 yards in 2005, the production dipped dramatically. Mario Manningham had 27 catches for 433 yards, followed by Breaston with just 26 receptions for just 291 yards.

Breaston knows he can do more as a senior.

"This is my last year, my last year playing for the school," he said. "It's not a given (I'll) be playing next year, so I want to take advantage of the opportunity."

—John Heuser

TOP KICKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Mason Crosby	Sr.	Colorado
2.	Brandon Coutu	Jr.	Georgia
3.	Darren McCaleb	Sr.	Southern Miss
4.	Alexis Serna	Jr.	Oregon State
5.	Andrew Wellock	Sr.	Eastern Michigan
6.	Paul Martinez	Sr.	Oregon
7.	Kyle Schlicher	Sr.	Iowa
8.	Jad Dean	Sr.	Clemson
9.	Sam Swank	So.	Wake Forest
10.	Brandon Pace	Sr.	Virginia Tech

TOP PUNTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Ken DeBauche	Jr.	Wisconsin
2.	Kody Bliss	Sr.	Auburn
3.	Brandon Fields	Sr.	Michigan State
4.	Adam Podlesh	Sr.	Maryland
5.	Nic Schmitt	Sr.	Virginia Tech
6.	Michael Gibson	Sr.	Memphis
7.	Brendan Carney	Sr.	Syracuse
8.	Gordon Ely-Kelso	Sr.	Georgia
9.	Adam Graessle	Sr.	Pittsburgh
10.	Jimmie Kaylor	Jr.	Colorado State

Not rated due to injury: Daniel Sepulveda, Baylor

TOP ALL-PURPOSE

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	Ted Ginn Jr.	Jr.	Ohio State
2.	Steve Breaston	Sr.	Michigan
3.	Rafael Little	Jr.	Kentucky
4.	Ryne Robinson	Sr.	Miami (Ohio)
5.	Willie Foster	Sr.	Rutgers
6.	Terry Richardson	Sr.	Arizona State
7.	Derrick Williams	So.	Penn State
8.	Rudy Burgess	Jr.	Arizona State
9.	Terrence Nunn	Jr.	Nebraska
10.	Felix Jones	So.	Arkansas

UNIT RANKINGS

OFFENSE

TOP 10 BACKFIELDS

1. OHIO STATE

To be placed atop this category, you can't just be strong at quarterback (sorry, Florida); you can't just have a wealth of running backs (sorry, Texas); and you can't simply be talented at both spots. You need experience (sorry, USC).

The thing you need to do is mix a Heisman candidate (quarterback Troy Smith) with a back who rushed for 1,331 yards last season (Antonio Pittman) with an already-enrolled super recruit (RB Chris Wells) with depth at both positions ... now, you have the top backfield in the nation.

Wells has power skills reminiscent of Maurice Clarett (without the baggage, please), but doesn't have to be "the show" with the speedy Pittman around.

As for Smith, he finished fourth in the nation in passing efficiency last season (162.7), and lacks for nothing to be even better.

2. WEST VIRGINIA

Two of the biggest discoveries of last season were do-it-all quarterback Patrick White and slithery running back Steve Slaton. This season, they could combine to rush for 2,500 yards (gulp, or more), lead the Mountaineers to the national title game, and generally become bigger-than-big stars. Get used to these twin powers; they're only sophomores.

3. NOTRE DAME

The Notre Dame record book will be all his, and QB Brady Quinn can add "legend" to his body of work if he takes Charlie Weiss' offense and spins it into a national title. RB Darius Walker isn't necessarily a breakaway threat, but he gets every inch out of his carries. When you added up all those inches, he had 1,196 yards last season.

4. MICHIGAN

Hart and Henne, Take 3. Juniors who have been around and around the Big Ten block, RB Mike Hart and QB Chad Henne are each in the top 10 nationally at their respective positions. As a three-year starter, Henne can break all of Michigan's career passing records. Hart, slowed by injury last season, has helped from sophomore Kevin Grady.

5. LOUISVILLE

Brian Brohm's torn ACL last November is reason for pause ... until you see that he was sharp in the spring (in non-contact drills, of course) and moving around just fine. Double B has plenty of zip on the



Troy Smith's 16 touchdown passes, with only four interceptions, helped make him one of the nation's most efficient passers.

ball, a skill that supersedes whatever lack of zip he has on the ground. Backfield mate Michael Bush is 250-pound, TD-scoring force. Hmmm... another Heisman-winning Bush?

6. Arizona State — Sam Keller and Rudy Carpenter could each be national top 10 quarterbacks. Sophomore RB Keegan Herring will be 1,000-yard rusher now that he has pushed Rudy Burgess to receiver.

7. LSU — Overflowing at quarterback, and Alley

Broussard can be superb (although he's coming off an ACL injury).

8. Iowa — Drew Tate (2,800 passing yards). Albert Young (1,300 rushing yards).

9. Auburn — RB Kenny Irons is one of nation's best. QB Brandon Cox is just fine.

10. Oklahoma — Rhett Bomar has to be better, and his year of experience helps just enough in a backfield that has Adrian Peterson.

TOP 10 RECEIVERS

1. USC

Tight ends are included in this category, which doesn't help USC after it lost circus-catcher Dominique Byrd. But the Trojans don't need much help from their tight ends. Their receivers are tall, fast and sure-handed.

The Trojans are trying to hit for the cycle, with a Heisman-winning QB in 2004, a Heisman-winning RB in 2005 ... and a Heisman-winning WR in 2006. OK, so it will be extremely hard for a pure wideout (no returns or dabbling on defense) to win the big prize, but junior Dwayne Jarrett at least has a fighting

chance before he dances off to the NFL.

Meanwhile, Steve Smith sails along with 119 career receptions, and sophomore Patrick Turner could be the next Jarrett.

And then Pete Carroll signed five more wideouts of the highest pedigree in the offseason including Vidal Hazelton, whose protracted recruitment involved a doozy of a battle with Penn State.

2. TEXAS TECH

Yeah, it's a crazy offense that produces crazy numbers, but who are we to argue with the Big 12

coaches? They made Jarrett Hicks and Joel Filani first-team all-league choices last season, and both receivers are back, along with Robert Johnson. Put them all together and they combined for 197 receptions, 2,853 yards and 22 touchdowns.

3. FLORIDA

Andre Caldwell was giving the Gators the versatility it wanted in Urban Meyer's offense, catching passes, taking handoffs, handling reverses. And then he broke his leg in the third game. He's back to be Mr. Everything, while Dallas Baker looked better than ever in the spring. Jemalle Cornelius is another solid starter in the spread, and Percy Harvin wasn't recruited to sit his first season.

4. NOTRE DAME

Consensus All-American Jeff Samardzija catches everything thrown his way, finishing last season with 77 receptions for 1,249 yards and 15 touchdowns. He no longer has Maurice Stovall running on the other side, but the Irish get back Rhema McKnight — the team's leading receiver in 2003 and 2004 — from a redshirt season. The Irish receiving corps should be even more productive and dangerous.

5. OHIO STATE

This could start and end with Ted Ginn Jr., and that might be good enough for us. He had four TD receptions last season — a modest number — but here are the style points: Those scores were each from at least 46 yards. Anthony Gonzalez and others ready to pick up their stats after the departure of Santonio Holmes provide the requisite help.

6. Texas — Junior Limas Sweed turned into a big-play threat, and with Billy Pittman, Quan Cosby, Jordan Shipley and others, UT is way OK.

7. Michigan — Mario Manningham and Steve Breaston. That's upside that is way up there.

8. Virginia Tech — No superstar, but super deep with David Clowney, Eddie Royal, Josh Morgan, Josh Hyman, Justin Harper ...

9. Miami — Ranked on potential, with Ryan Moore and Lance Leggett trying to shed underachieving labels. TE Greg Olsen is an NFLer.

10. Florida State — Chris Davis, De'Cody Fagg and the 6-6 Greg Carr (20.6 yards per catch).

TOP 10 OFFENSIVE LINES

1. TEXAS

The Longhorns have Lindy's top-rated tackle (Justin Blalock) and top-rated guard (Kasey Studdard), so it's only natural that UT has Lindy's top-rated offensive line. Perhaps apologies are in order to Lyle Sendlein, a very fine player in his own right but not our top-rated center.

Top ranking or not, these hosses will make life easy (well, as easy as can be expected) for the Longhorns' new quarterbacks. Blalock will become yet another Texas offensive lineman picked high in the NFL draft.

2. CLEMSON

The Tigers return all five starters. Thanks to the Clemson sports information office for turning up this stat: The last four seasons in which the Tigers have had all five starting linemen returning, they are 39-9, including the undefeated national championship run of 1981. Hard to single out one guy, but if we had to, it would be guard Roman Fry.

3. USC

It is acknowledged that the personnel losses were significant — Winston Justice, Deuce Lutui and Fred Matua — but what other team (other than Texas) has two potential first-team All-Americans? Pac-10 coaches couldn't agree last season whether tackle Sam Baker or center Ryan Kalil made the Trojans' line go, and that duo is joined by talented guard Jeff Byers, coming off a redshirt.

4. ARKANSAS

No big names — other than maybe oft-injured tackle Zac Tubbs — but four starters return for a team that was the only one in the SEC to average more than 200 yards a game and 5 yards a carry (rounding up from 4.96).

5. MICHIGAN

Can't have a list of top offensive lines without the Wolverines popping up somewhere. Jake Long is switching from right tackle to left tackle, leading a unit that includes two other starters and center Mark Bihl, who has starting experience, too.

6. Notre Dame — Four veterans return, including left tackle Ryan Harris.

7. Oregon State — Starting group returns intact, including Pac-10 co-freshman of the year Jeremy Perry, a guard.

8. Ohio State — Plenty of experience and versatility, personified by senior center/tackle Doug Datish.

9. West Virginia — All-American center Dan Mozes, second-team All-Big East guard Jeremy Sheffey and freshman All-American guard Ryan Stancheck.

10. Auburn — Tigers' guards — Tim Duckworth and Ben Grubbs — are SEC's best combo.

Dwayne Jarrett (left) and Steve Smith are back to do more dancing in the end zone for USC; Jarrett had 16 TD receptions last season.



UNIT RANKINGS

DEFENSE

TOP 10 DEFENSIVE LINES



Oklahoma's Larry Birdine, who missed last season due to injury, is part of the best group of defensive ends in the country, and they won't have to chase Texas quarterback Vince Young anymore.

1. OKLAHOMA

The Sooners will be stronger up front, even after the loss of DT Dusty Dvoracek (18 tackles for loss) and especially because the linemen don't have to chase Vince Young around anymore.

Basically, OU's line runneth over with talent, with end Larry Birdine coming back from a redshirt year (torn biceps) to join Big 12 Defensive Newcomer of the Year C.J. Ah You (seven sacks last season) and Calvin Thibodeaux (10 sacks). John Williams also returns from a redshirt season.

No troubles on the interior, either. Carl Pendleton has been rock solid, joined this season by Cory Bennett, Steve Coleman and very promising redshirt freshman DeMarcus Granger.

2. TEXAS

The Longhorns have plenty of beef but rate a tick behind Oklahoma, a designation the national champs can probably live with because, well, they're national champs. Three-fourths of that national championship line returns (all but DT Rod Wright), with DE Tim Crowder (20 quarterback hurries) leading the way. DT Frank Okam is massive in the middle.

3. FLORIDA

The Gators have two of the best pass rushers in the league in Ray McDonald and Jarvis Moss, and they could be something if they get healthy at the

same time, which hasn't happened much. Marcus Thomas is an All-America candidate at tackle, and Steven Harris is a second-season starter.

4. MIAMI

Senior Baraka Atkins is back after considering the NFL draft; he has 13 career sacks, bouncing between end and tackle. The tentative plan is for him to play end opposite Bryan Pata (10 career sacks), with Kareem Brown replacing disappointing Orien Harris — likely an upgrade — on the inside.

5. CALIFORNIA

Brandon Mebane had seven sacks last season, a high number for an interior lineman and a good reason why he's Lindy's top-rated defensive tackle. While he gave the Pac-10 fits, so, too, did second-team all-league end Nu'u Tafisi. Nearly the entire two-

deep returns, including 333-pound starting DT Matt Malele.

6. Arkansas — The only team in the SEC that returns the entire front four, led by DE Jamaal Anderson and DT Keith Jackson.

7. USC — Sedrick Ellis is becoming study inside, and DE Lawrence Jackson has All-America potential.

8. Ohio State — Quinn Pitcock and David Patterson are the only two returning starters on D; they're one of the best pairs around.

9. Georgia — Quentin Moses and Charles Johnson ... better DE combination than Oklahoma's?

10. Arizona State — Banking on big contributions from at least two of three transfers from four-year schools.

TOP 10 LINEBACKERS

1. USC

Memo to recruits: USC does not need any more linebackers.

The Trojans are perhaps as much as three-deep with linebackers who could start for almost anyone.

Nobody's job is safe. Look for Keith Rivers to be a pass-rushing force off the edge, especially if the Trojans go to a 3-4 look on occasion.

That look would also give Oscar Lua and Rey Mauluga the chance to be on the field at the same time instead of competing for time. Dallas Sartz

returns after missing most of last season because of a shoulder injury, reclaiming a starting spot ... but he'll have to keep right on earning it.

2. PENN STATE

Linebacker U. has the reigning Butkus Award winner in Paul Posluszny, but the high billing in this category is more than just a reflection of Poz. Junior Dan Connor, ticketed for stardom since before he arrived on campus, just might get there in his third season as a starter. Senior Tim Shaw is ever-steady on the other side, a perfect complement to the playmaking Posluszny.

3. VIRGINIA TECH

Vince Hall, the leader of another stingy Hokies defense, made 112 tackles last season, with three sacks, two interceptions and 15 quarterback hurries. Xavier Adibi, a junior, can also play the pass and the run, and has yet to reach his full potential.

4. CLEMSON

Anthony Waters, the top returning tackler in the ACC, has great range, but not even he has as much speed as fellow senior Tramine Billie. But not even Billie has a starting spot locked up because sophomore Antonio Clay is pushing him hard. Nick Watkins is the third returning starter in the best group in the ACC.

5. CALIFORNIA

It helps Cal that powerhouse City College of San Francisco is right there, and the Bears drove over a couple of years ago to get middle 'backer Desmond Bishop, who led the team in tackles last season (89) and earned All-Pac-10 honors. Talented sophomores are beside him, and Mickey Pimentel can do plenty off the bench.

6. Georgia — Three starters return, including Tony Taylor outside and Jarvis Jackson inside.

7. Nebraska — Corey McKeon is a fiery leader, and competition will be fierce if everyone gets healthy at the same time.

8. Florida — Brandon Siler and Earl Everett are excellent. After that?

9. Texas — Robert Killebrew is nasty on the strongside, and high-class recruit Sergio Kindle might help right away.

10. Oklahoma — Rufus Alexander is the central figure in a position group that is never lacking under Bob Stoops.

TOP 10 DEFENSIVE BACKS

1. MIAMI

No strangers to turning out first-round picks, the Hurricanes might have packed a few such players into the safety position.

It starts with free safety Brandon Meriweather, a Lindy's preseason All-American who set a school record last season with 76 solo tackles. He finished with 114 overall, including 13 for loss.

Sophomores Kenny Phillips and Anthony Reddick help form the best safety trio in the nation, and should make a heck of a nickel package. The cornerback position is boosted by the strong return of Glenn Sharpe, out for most of the past two seasons because of knee injuries.

2. LSU

Safeties LaRon Landry and Jessie Daniels have been key members of the secondary since the Tigers' 2003 championship season. Landry, Lindy's top-rated safety, is shooting for three-time All-SEC honors. Depth is strong at those positions, and junior Chevis Jackson returns as a starting cornerback.

3. ARIZONA

Junior cornerback Antoine Cason has an NFL future, and coach Mike Stoops says senior strong safety Michael Johnson "has a chance to be a first-rounder." Wilrey Fontenot, like Cason, is entering his third season as a starter, and is one of the best in the Pac-10. It's enough to give Mike's big bro, Bob, secondary envy.

4. CAL

The Bears, like Pac-10 mate Arizona, feature one of the top cornerback combinations in the country in Daymeion Hughes and Tim Mixon. Unlike Arizona, however, Cal doesn't appear to have an NFL-ready prospect at safety, although Thomas DeCoud at free safety has some major athletic skills.

5. TENNESSEE

The Vols bring back everyone who started the final six games of last season, with talent behind them, including safety Demetrius Morley. Cornerback Inky Johnson has All-SEC potential, but the team's best defensive back is safety Jonathan Hefney, who had a team-best three interceptions last season.

6. Oklahoma — Versatile D.J. Wolfe and Reggie Smith settle into their roles at cornerback.

7. Colorado — J.J. Billingsley leads a deep group at safety, but corners won't be quite as strong.

8. Auburn — Three starters, including CB David Irons, return ... maybe ex-safety Will Herring will move back from linebacker.

9. Texas — Michael Griffin has a chance to be an All-American, and last year's depth steps to the front.

10. Utah — Combo defensive back Eric Weddle is a future high draft pick; safety Casey Evans is All-MWC.



Keith Rivers and all his talented pals at linebacker will be looking to drive Notre Dame quarterback Brady Quinn into the turf again when the teams meet in Los Angeles in late November.

A Sure Thing

By Anthony Gimino

Illustration by
Noah Kroese

National Championship Race Won't be Boring

When Vince Young packed up his football and high-stepped to the NFL, the job of picking a preseason No. 1 got a whole lot tougher.

Pity.

Young's Rose Bowl slicing and dicing kept USC from — uh, thriving, as it were — and it would have been so easy for us if he had just decided to stay in burnt orange for his senior season.

But, nooooo. He had to be Mr. NFL High Draft Pick, leaving the college football world without one of those take-it-to-Vegas preseason picks.

So, answering the question of "Who's No. 1?" is more problematic than it has been in recent years.

It was so simple the past two years, taking about as long as a Reggie



Bush 70-yard touchdown run (OK, not even that long), to figure out that USC was going to be the preseason No. 1. It was only a tad bit trickier earlier in the decade, when logic dictated that the deep talent pools at Miami and Oklahoma were unimpeachable choices.

This season, *Lindy's* top three choices for the national title feature:

- *A defense that was the worst in school history last season.

- *A defense that has to replace nine starters.

- *A team with a sophomore quarterback, a sophomore running back and, whose resume leans heavily on its "easier-than-yours" schedule.

We're talking about Notre Dame, Ohio State, and West Virginia.

We don't want to eliminate Texas and USC out of hand, but the hardest thing to do is replace a championship quarterback, which both teams are doing. They're still both candidates, considering they're still the best the Big 12 and Pac-10 have to offer.

The SEC, meantime, is stacked. That's good for the league. And bad. Nothing is harder than getting through the SEC undefeated. If anybody does, let's go ahead and make them No. 1, no matter where they start in the polls. (We're pretty sure Auburn fans will agree with us.)

The ACC's premier teams — Florida State, Miami, Virginia Tech — have featured better teams in recent seasons. Check back next year.

So, we're back where we started: Notre Dame, Ohio State and West Virginia.

Fabulous offenses, each of them, so the race for the top shouldn't be boring.

And this is all a good thing, of course, because while USC would have been chasing history this season if it had won the Rose Bowl, that would have pretty much been the entire discussion in college football.

Now, dozens and dozens of teams are aptly in the conversation, either because they're pretty darn good or because everyone else is potentially tragically flawed.

In any case, welcome to a wild season.

BCS MATCHUPS

A couple of things are changing, other than the addition of another BCS game.

Four of five BCS games, will be broadcast on Fox, rather than ABC, which will continue to telecast the Rose Bowl.

And since sponsorships make the college football world go 'round, get used to hearing about the Allstate (not Nokia) Sugar Bowl, and, perhaps more alarmingly, the 2008 Allstate BCS national championship game.

Conferences with automatic berths are expected to get about \$17 million this season, working up to \$18.5 after the 2009 regular season. A conference with a second team in the BCS gets \$4.5 mil added to its stash.

Get thee to Glendale

This is the first year of the BCS double-hosting system, with the Fiesta folks actually doing triple-hosting.

They will put on the Insight Bowl, which moves from the Arizona Diamondbacks' Chase Field to Sun Devil Stadium ... and then the Fiesta Bowl, which moves from Sun Devil Stadium to the new Cardinals Stadium in Glendale ... and then the "new" stand-alone BCS national title game on Jan. 8, also at Cardinals Stadium.

Essentially, the No. 1 and No. 2 teams are removed from the BCS pool to play in the BCS national title game ... and chances are they'll be champions of two of the major conferences. That leaves

BCS national championship game

Monday, Jan. 8, 2007

Glendale, Ariz. * Cardinals Stadium
BCS #1 vs. BCS #2

Lindy's pick: Notre Dame vs. Ohio State

Fiesta Bowl

Monday, Jan. 1, 2007

Glendale, Ariz. * Cardinals Stadium
Big 12 champ vs. BCS at-large

Lindy's pick: Texas vs. California

Rose Bowl

Monday, Jan. 1, 2007

Pasadena, Calif. * Rose Bowl
Pac-10 champ vs. Big Ten champ

Lindy's pick: USC vs. Oklahoma

Orange Bowl

Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2007

Miami * Dolphins Stadium
ACC or Big East champ vs. BCS at-large

Lindy's pick: Florida State vs. Auburn

Sugar Bowl

Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2007

New Orleans * Superdome
SEC champ vs. BCS at-large

Lindy's pick: Florida vs. West Virginia

the four big bowls to pick from four remaining major conference champions and fill their other four spots with at-large teams.

The rules say that "one conference champion from among Conference USA, Mid-American, Mountain West, Sun Belt, and Western Athletic Conferences will automatically qualify to play in a BCS bowl if it is: (1) ranked among the top 12 teams in the final BCS standings; or (2) ranked among the top 16 teams in the final BCS standings and ranked higher than the champion of one of the conferences whose champion has an annual automatic berth in a BCS bowl."

Notre Dame is guaranteed an at-large berth if it is ranked No. 8 or better in the final BCS standings.

Comeback players

Injuries, academics, suspensions — typical reasons for a player falling into the “comeback” category.



Then there's **Cal offensive tackle Mike Pepper.**

On June 26, 2005, he saw several guys in a car harassing Cal volleyball player Camille Leffall and not letting her pass. Pepper intervened, and when he and Leffall walked away, passing behind the car, the driver punched it into reverse.

Pepper managed to push Leffall out of the way (she glanced off the car and suffered minor injuries), but he got hit in full, was knocked to the ground and a tire ran over his right leg. Then the driver, later caught and found to be on parole, went forward and crushed Pepper's leg again.

Pepper suffered severe ligament damage, a broken fibula and a dislocated tibia. Yet, 10 months later (in the spring), he was a first-string tackle. Now, that's what we call a comeback player.

Here are 11 other comebacks (and then some), all of whom missed all or most of last season:

Larry Birdine, DE, Oklahoma (biceps). His return elevates Sooners line to best in the nation.

Cory Boyd, RB, South Carolina (suspension). Versatile as a pass-catcher, he's what Steve Spurrier wants in a running back.

Alley Broussard, RB, LSU (knee). Tigers' leading rusher in 2004 needs to come back strong with Justin Vincent rehabbing an ACL.

Andre Caldwell, WR, Florida (leg). He adds dimensions to the offense that no other Gator does.

Terry Caulley, RB, UConn (knee). Missed most of past two years, but is

bearing down on the school rushing record.

Matt Herian, TE, Nebraska (leg). Out since October 2004 (broken tibia and fibia), he could be a terror in Huskers' new passing game.

Nate Longshore, QB, Cal (leg injury). Slight leader of four-man race for starter; Bears just need solid play at QB to be very dangerous.

Rhema McKnight, WR, Notre Dame (knee). Now gets his shot in Charlie Weis' prolific offense.

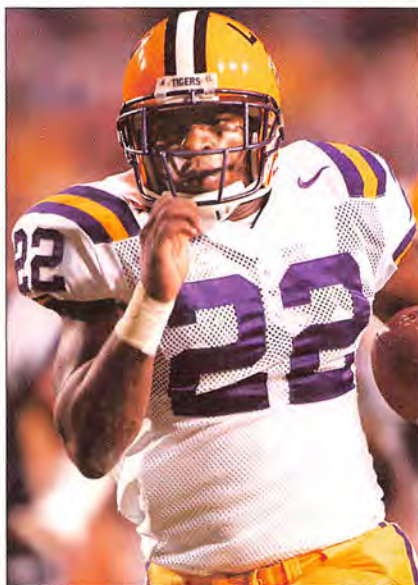
Joe Newton, TE, Oregon State (leg). One of the best in the nation, he'll be a needed safety valve for interception-prone Matt Moore.

Glenn Sharpe, CB, Miami (knees). Missed most of past two seasons; coach Larry Coker says Sharpe might be as good as departed Kelly Jennings.

Zac Tubbs, OT, Arkansas (ankle). Mammoth senior shedding pounds in order to stay healthy and help lead Hogs out of a two-year rebuilding project.

Honorable mention: FB Brandon Hancock, OG Jeff Byers, OLB Dallas Sartz, CB Terrell Thomas, SS Kevin Ellison ... all back, all potential starters for USC.

Alley Broussard



It was a sleepy offseason for coaching changes, with only 10 teams swapping head coaches, including just three BCS-level programs.

Only one team in the last season's final Top 25 — No. 15 Wisconsin — had a change in command, with that being the peaceful and planned transition from retiring/full-time athletic director Barry Alvarez to former defensive coordinator Bret Bielema.

Surest sign it's been a slow news offseason? Idaho (!) made the biggest hiring splash.

From Buffalo to the Buffaloes, to Golden hires to a Prince of a guy, here is the who, what, where and why of the new coaches in new places.

Boise State

Out: Dan Hawkins

In: Chris Petersen

Business as usual. Petersen has presided over the Broncos' prolific offense as coordinator, and the popular coach was a no-brainer pick after Hawkins went to Colorado. This is a pipeline position (see Houston Nutt, Dirk Koetter and Hawkins) and Petersen should develop into their class.

Buffalo

Out: Jim Hofher

In: Turner Gill

Some serious name recognition, and that's a fine place to start for one of the worst teams in Division I-A. Gill finished fourth in the 1983 Heisman balloting and spanned Tom Osborne to Bill Callahan as a Husker assistant. A perfect marriage: Buffalo gets attention (and a better offense) and Gill gets his foot in the door.

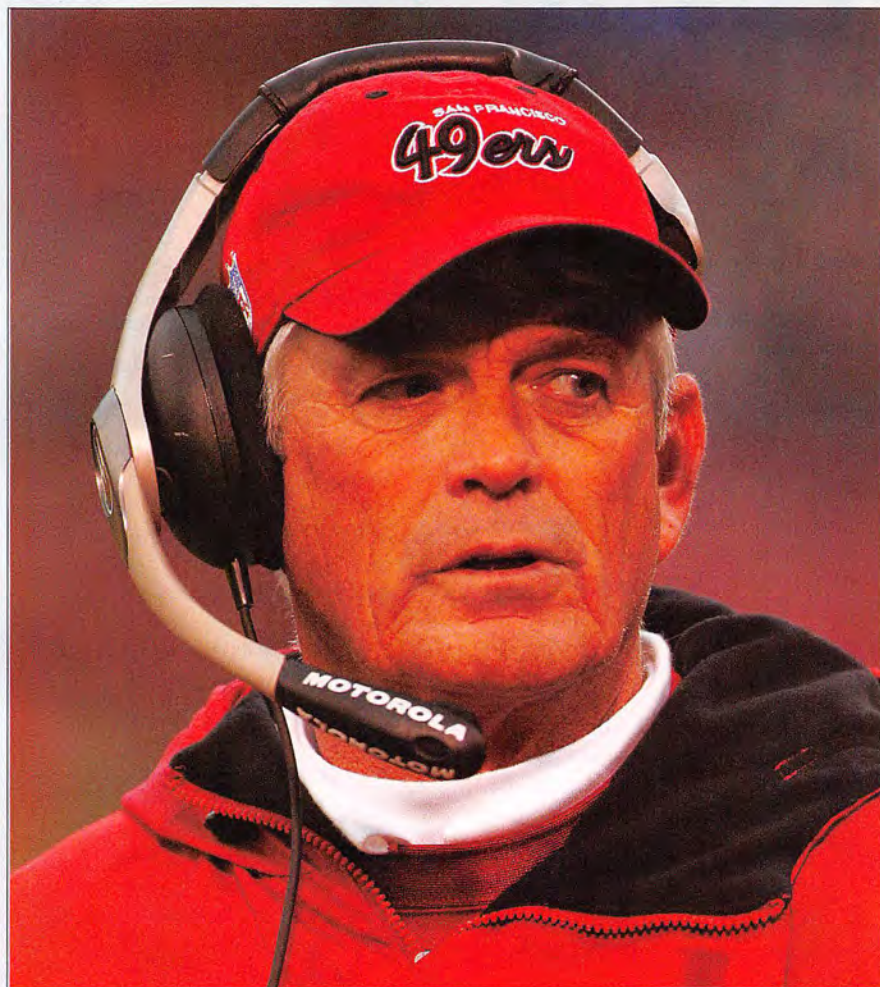
Colorado

Out: Gary Barnett

In: Dan Hawkins

Colorado puts the controversial Barnett Era in the past while landing a guy near the top of most AD's lists in the past few years. Good deal. Hawkins should be plenty acceptable to the fan base, especially with his penchant for developing a passing game.

Coaching Carousel



Dennis Erickson

Kansas State

Out: Bill Snyder

In: Ron Prince

The dream job for the 36-year-old Prince, the one caveat being he has to follow a K-State legend. Good news is that Snyder's best-ever-in-the-NCAA rebuilding job had started to backslide, so Prince, most recently Virginia's offensive coordinator, gets to take over when there are only modest expectations.

Idaho

Out: Nick Holt

In: Dennis Erickson

Score! Erickson never should

have taken a second bite of the NFL apple, leaving an Oregon State job he loved for the 49ers in 2003. Now, he's back in his small-town Northwest roots, at a program he coached from 1982 to 1985. It won't take the Vandals long to at least become a mid-level WAC team (a major improvement, by the way).

Middle Tennessee

Out: Andy McCollum

In: Rick Stockstill

MTSU has lost its offensive groove, so in comes 46-year-old Stockstill, a noted recruiter who has his pick of glitzy playbooks. Whatever

he lifts from his former bosses — Steve Spurrier, Lou Holtz, Danny Ford, Tommy Bowden, Ken Hatfield — likely will be plenty good.

Rice

Out: Ken Hatfield

In: Todd Graham

Graham had been Tulsa's defensive coordinator for three seasons, but he also spent two years with Rich Rodriguez at West Virginia, which explains Rice's new spread offense. That, coupled with the hiring of Major Applewhite as offensive coordinator, should help the Owls bring in talented QBs (Pierre Beasley was the star of the class).

San Diego State

Out: Tom Craft

In: Chuck Long

Long has been a hot prospect for a while, and he was smart to wait for the right opportunity to have his ticket punched, as the Aztecs job is considered one with untapped potential. Long brings instant credibility, having been at Oklahoma for the past six seasons, including four as offensive coordinator.

Temple

Out: Bobby Wallace

In: Al Golden

Golden has ties to the Northeast, growing up in New Jersey, starting at tight end at Penn State and also coaching with the Nittany Lions and Boston College. He's young (37 in July) and has already been a defensive coordinator at Virginia for five years, so he's a bit of a coaching whiz kid. But is he half-crazy to take this reconstruction job?

Wisconsin

Out: Barry Alvarez

In: Bret Bielema

Bielema, not by much over newbies Ron Prince and Al Golden, is the youngest coach in Division I-A, having turned 36 in January. As the Badgers' defensive coordinator, he was hand-picked to replace Alvarez before last season. Passionate and energetic, Bielema will tweak but won't have to stray too far from the blueprint.

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Assistant Coaching Carousel

Must have been great fun to see Ed Orgeron and Art Kehoe careening around the Mississippi practice fields in the spring.

The Rebels' head coach, who last year tore off his shirt and challenged his players to a fight, is renowned for his — uh, enthusiasm. Kehoe is only slightly less manic.

"It's on," Orgeron says with a deep laugh. "It's just like the old days. I love it."

Orgeron brought Kehoe aboard in January to coach the Rebel offensive line, also bringing in Dan Werner to run the offense. Both had been fired by Miami coach Larry Coker in a post-Peach Bowl purge.

"(Hiring them) was a no-brainer," Orgeron said. "It was like recruiting blue-chip players. You just go get 'em."

They were part of a flurry of high-profile moves in the assistant coaching ranks that, in some cases, were more intriguing than the head coaching hirings.

Besides the Miami shakeup:

- **David Cutcliffe** returned to Tennessee to handle the wobbly Vols offense.
- Ousted Vols coordinator **Randy Sanders** ended up at Kentucky.
- **Nick Holt**, resigning as Idaho head coach to go to the NFL, instead took a detour to USC as defensive coordinator.
- Former Wyoming and Houston head coach **Dana Dimel** was hired at Arizona, rejoining Mike Stoops; they were on Bill Snyder's staff together at K-State.
- Arkansas hired offensive coordinator **Gus Malzahn** from the high school ranks, where he coached top QB recruit (and, ahem, Razorbacks signee) Mitch Mustain.
- Former UCLA head coach **Bob Toledo** was hired by his former as-



David Cutcliffe

stant, Rocky Long, to be offensive coordinator at New Mexico.

• Cal nabbed **Mike Dunbar** from Northwestern to introduce the Spread offense.

• Former Western Michigan head coach (and longtime defensive guru at Texas, Florida, North Carolina, etc.)

Gary Darnell landed as defensive coordinator at Texas A&M, where he will make \$285,000 ... which is not uncommon for top assistants these days, illustrating just how important these guys are.

Cutcliffe's return to Knoxville, where he spent 17 years, is perfectly timed. The man who tutored Peyton Manning is entrusted to bring order to an offense that has sagged more each season since Cutcliffe's departure in 1998.

Tennessee almost didn't get Cutcliffe back. If he hadn't undergone triple bypass surgery last spring, he would be entering his second season as quarterbacks coach at Notre Dame.

"We had a special staff there, and I was there long enough to bond with them," he said.

He discovered it was easy to reconnect in Knoxville, particularly since he better understands head coach Phillip Fulmer after having directed his own program.

"I know who the final decision-maker is," Cutcliffe said. "I understand the chain of command, but Phillip will listen to you."

Especially if you get the offense back on track.

— Michael Bradley



Before

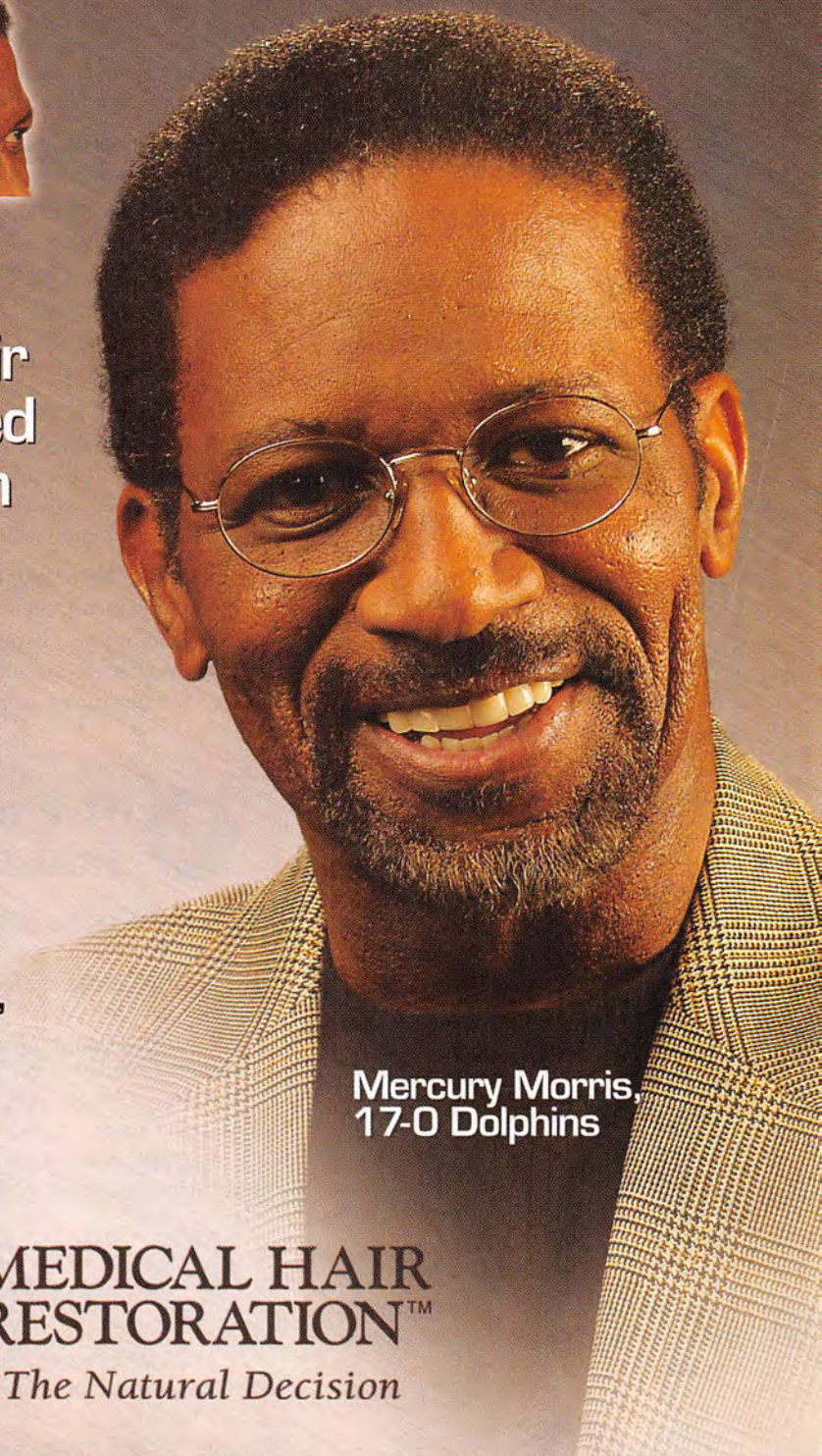


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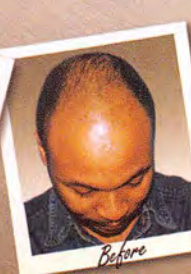
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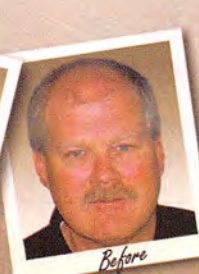
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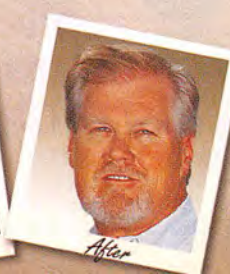
Before



After



Before



After

5 Five Fab Frosh

Here are five true freshmen who should impact the national title chase. And it sure helps that three of them went through spring ball.



Percy Harvin

Percy Harvin, WR, Florida

Nation's No. 1 recruit arrives just in time for offense to take flight.

Stafon Johnson, RB, USC

The Trojans have a stable of new backs coming in; he's considered the (slightly) best bet.

Myron Rolle, SS, Florida State

Had 64-yard interception return for a touchdown in FSU's spring game.

Jevan Snead, QB, Texas

He'll play ... can he take control of the position from Colt McCoy?

Chris Wells, RB, Ohio State

A deep backfield, but he showed what he could do in the spring when Antonio Pittman was sidelined.

5 Five impact major-college transfers

Pat Carter, WR, Louisville (from Georgia Tech). He's 6-3, has speed to

burn, and the coaches can put him at quarterback for an athletic change-up.

BenJarvus Green-Ellis, RB, Ole Miss (from Indiana). Walks right into a starting job and gives the Rebels the power back they need.

Rocky Hinds, QB, UNLV (from USC). Has accumulated some rust, but he'll get a chance to be Rebs' starter sooner rather than later.

Loren Howard, DE, Arizona State (from Northwestern). If he doesn't fortify ASU's line, then maybe DT Michael Marquardt (from BYU) or Tranell Morant (Florida) will.

Akieem Jolla, WR, New Mexico State (from Miami). NCAA says he doesn't have to sit a year because he's moving to be closer to his mother, displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

5 Five impact JC transfers

Jasper Brinkley, LB, South Carolina. Hitting so hard in spring, Steve Spurrier had to tell him to calm down.

Larry Grant, LB, Ohio State. QB Troy Smith noted in spring that Grant has a "linebacker's attitude I think we're going to need."

Louis Holmes, DE, Arizona. Pete Carroll kept calling and calling, but Holmes stuck with Mike Stoops and crew.

Brent Schaeffer, QB, Ole Miss. Former Tennessee starter gets keys to the offense, no questions asked.

Brandon Walker, OL, Oklahoma. Opportunity available when he arrives in the fall, with three years of eligibility left.

5 Five must-see non-conference games

1. Notre Dame at USC, Nov. 25 — Unlike last year in South Bend, the Trojans will have the grass cut low for a super-fast track.

2. Ohio State at Texas, Sept. 9 — The spirit of Vince Young returns to Austin ... in Ohio State QB Troy Smith.

3. Nebraska at USC, Sept. 16 — First meeting in 36 years gives Huskers chance to be relevant again.

4. Penn State at Notre Dame, Sept. 9 — We would have really liked to have seen this one last season.

5. California at Tennessee, Sept. 2 — Imagine the grumbling if the Vols lose their opener after a 5-6 season.

5 Five must-see conference games

1. Oklahoma vs. Texas (in Dallas), Oct. 7 — 40,000 fans wearing orange 2005 national championship shirts; 40,000 fans wearing red 2000 national championship shirts.

2. Florida at Auburn, Oct. 14 — If our crystal ball is right, this will be the preview of the SEC Championship Game.

3. West Virginia at Louisville, Nov. 2 — Thursday night matchup sure looks like it will be for Big East's BCS bid.

4. Michigan at Ohio State, Nov. 18 — Jim Tressel has won four of five vs. Big Blue ... this one could be to get into national title game.

5. South Carolina at Florida, Nov. 11 — Sorry, just can't resist the whole Spurrier returns to The Swamp angle.

Cowboys	+7	49'ers	+15
Giants	+1	-2	+9
-9		+6	+8
Packers	-4	-2	-5
+8	+10	-8	-5
Bills	-6	+1	-3
		+7	Raiders



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	Redskins / Cowboys	↓ 35 1/2	14-13	W
O22	Kentucky (+10)	Ole Miss	7-13	W
O29	Oklahoma (-2)	Nebraska	31-24	W
N19	Oklahoma (+7 1/2)	Tex Tech	21-23	W
D 3	Georgia (+1 1/2)	LSU	34-14	W
D17	Patriots (-6)	Bucs	28-0	W
D18	Chargers (+7 1/2)	Colts	26-17	W
J 2	Alabama (+3 1/2)	Tex Tech	13-10	W
J 8	Panthers (+3)	Giants	23-0	W

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Got a few seconds?

The average length of a regular-season college football game in 2005 was 3 hours, 21 minutes — two minutes more than the previous season.

Most of that can be attributed to the use of instant replay, but with or without the reviews, the length of a college game has become increasingly bloated by more passing — which leads to more clock-stopping incompletions and first downs.

So, there are a few new rules this season designed to shave seconds here and there and get you back into the postgame traffic jam a wee bit earlier.

☆☆ On a change of possession, the clock will start when the ball is ready to play.

☆☆ The clock will start on the kickoff (or as we prefer to say, when toe meets leather) rather than when the returning team touches the ball.

☆☆ The kicking tee was shortened to one inch, curtailing distance on kickoff and presumably reducing touchbacks.

One little Indian

The Louisiana-Monroe Indians, one of 18 NCAA schools who were identified last summer as having nicknames, mascots or logos “hostile or abusive” to American Indians, have made a change.

La.-Monroe is now the Warhawks.

The nickname harkens to the area’s aviation history, with northeast Louisiana General Claire Chennault piloting the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk during World War II. That, and there are hawks native to the region.

Among Division I-A football schools, the Florida State Seminoles, the Central Michigan Chippewas and the Utah Utes were allowed by the NCAA to keep their nicknames after the schools received tribal approval.

That leaves only one I-A school still using Indians ... for now.

Arkansas State.

12 Let’s play a dozen

After spending years telling us that a college football playoff is infeasible, partly due to the added stress it would put on student-athletes, Division I-A presidents and athletic directors enthusiastically approved a 12th regular-season game.

The 12-game season was tried in 2002 and 2003, and the genie was out of the bottle. We were told the 12-game season would resume intermittently, as the calendar deemed, beginning again in 2008.

Here we are in 2006 ... and this thing is permanent.

Bottom line: There is money to be made.

So, how are various schools and leagues handling the new opportunity?

Some are going straight for the fattest calf by inviting Division I-AA victims to town, awarding them a nice payday (\$350-500,000) and a loss. Smaller schools call these “body bag games” while hoping the big check doesn’t come with a corresponding spate of injuries.

For the I-A hosts, paying off a I-AA team is sometimes half as expensive as sharing the gate with a I-A team. So, there is a straight profit motivation. And the BCS school never needs to agree to a return game at a lower-division opponent, so the matchup is a clean one-and-done.

A survey of the 65 BCS conference schools reveals that 47 of them (72.3 percent) will be playing a I-AA team this year, with the Big 12 (11 of 12) the most egregious offender.

“A lot of schools were left scrambling to find games,” says Colorado assistant athletic director David Plati, who serves on the school’s scheduling committee.

The Buffs will play Montana State on Sept. 2, the first (and only, according to Plati) time they will meet a I-AA foe.

Colorado has added a home-and-home with Georgia that begins this season and plans to play a strong intersectional foe each season, thanks in part to the flexibility provided by the 12th game and with the hope of attracting some extra TV money in the process. CU also meets Colorado State each year in a heated rivalry game.

Its other two non-conference games won’t be as difficult, in large part because the school doesn’t want to disqualify itself from BCS championship contention.

“We have to see what everybody else is doing,” Plati said. “We don’t want to jeopardize the program by playing four tough non-conference games.”

The Pac-10 is using the longer season to add a ninth league game to the schedule, creating a full round-robin.

“We didn’t want Team A to win the league championship because it missed Team B on the schedule,” said Pac-10 associate commissioner Jim Muldoon. That never happened in the 28 years since it expanded to 10 teams, but he allows that “it was just dumb luck.”

— Michael Bradley

SCOPING the NATION

SNEAK PEEK

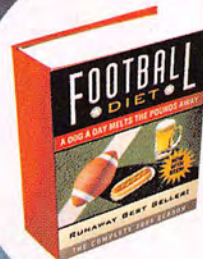
Here is our annual look at the draft-eligible college players who have the most to look forward to from the 2007 NFL draft. With a little guidance from the folks over at NFLdraftscout.com, we took the seniors with the biggest NFL upside, sprinkled in 10 hot juniors ... and came up with a nifty 50. Which teams had the most players on the list? Notre Dame, USC and Michigan, with four.

NO.	PLAYER	POS.	TEAM
1.	Brady Quinn	QB	Notre Dame
2.	Adrian Peterson*	RB	Oklahoma
3.	Quentin Moses	DE	Georgia
4.	Calvin Johnson*	WR	Georgia Tech
5.	Joe Thomas	OT	Wisconsin
6.	Gaines Adams	DE	Clemson
7.	Drew Stanton	QB	Michigan State
8.	Paul Posluszny	LB	Penn State
9.	Marshawn Lynch*	RB	California
10.	Michael Bush	RB	Louisville
11.	Ted Ginn Jr.*	WR	Ohio State
12.	Brian Brohm*	QB	Louisville
13.	Baraka Atkins	DE	Miami
14.	Justin Blalock	OT	Texas
15.	Dwayne Jarrett*	WR	USC
16.	Quinn Pitcock	DT	Ohio State
17.	H.B. Blades	LB	Pittsburgh
18.	Tim Crowder	DE	Texas
19.	Kenny Irons	RB	Auburn
20.	LaMarr Woodley	DE	Michigan
21.	Leon Hall	CB	Michigan
22.	Marcus Thomas	DT	Florida
23.	Levi Brown	OT	Penn State
24.	Lawrence Jackson*	DE	USC
25.	LaRon Landry	FS	LSU
26.	Jeff Samardzija	WR	Notre Dame
27.	Sam Baker*	OT	USC
28.	Michael Griffin	FS	Texas
29.	Adam Carriker	DE	Nebraska
30.	Tom Zbikowski	SS	Notre Dame
31.	Brandon Mebane	DT	California
32.	Quentin Groves*	DE	Auburn
33.	Ken Darby	RB	Alabama
34.	Steve Breaston	WR	Michigan
35.	Brandon Meriweather	S	Miami
36.	Rufus Alexander	LB	Oklahoma
37.	Patrick Willis	LB	Mississippi
38.	Sedrick Ellis*	DT	USC
39.	Brian Leonard	RB	Rutgers
40.	Kyle Young	C	Fresno State
41.	Earl Everett	LB	Florida
42.	Daymeion Hughes	CB	California
43.	Justin Harrell	DT	Tennessee
44.	Victor Abiamiri	DE	Notre Dame
45.	Jason Hill	WR	Washington State
46.	Jake Long	OT	Michigan
47.	Troy Smith	QB	Ohio State
48.	Paul Williams	WR	Fresno State
49.	Greg Olsen*	TE	Miami
50.	Lorenzo Booker	RB	Florida State

* Junior



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Heisman Watch

Quarterbacks had won five Heisman trophies in a row before USC running back Reggie Bush made the stiff-armed statue his last season. Still, this award has gravitated toward quarterbacks on national championship-contending teams, which is why it's a slam dunk that Notre Dame's Brady Quinn starts at No. 1.

Let's see ... the QB from our projected Big Ten champ is represented (Troy Smith) ... and our SEC champ (Chris Leak) and our Big East champ (Pat White). No such preseason Heisman Watch honor for the new quarterback at USC or Florida State sophomore Drew Weatherford.

OK, so Penn State linebacker Paul Posluszny is not going to win it, but his inclusion on the list is less of a prediction than a nod to what *should* be. If he comes back from a knee injury as well as expected, he deserves a spot in New York City for the ceremonies.

1. Brady Quinn	QB	Notre Dame
2. Adrian Peterson	RB	Oklahoma
3. Troy Smith	QB	Ohio State
4. Marshawn Lynch	RB	Cal
5. Paul Posluszny	LB	Penn State
6. Chris Leak	QB	Florida
7. Ted Ginn Jr.	WR/RET	Ohio State
8. Chad Henne	QB	Michigan
9. Pat White	QB	West Virginia
10. Dwayne Jarrett	WR	USC

Bronko Nagurski Watch

Penn State's Paul Posluszny has already won an honor like this, taking home the Chuck Bednarik Award last season, also given to the nation's top defender. The Bronko Nagurski Award, awarded by the Football Writers Association of America, last season went to Louisville sack-master Elvis Dumervil.

The player most likely to duplicate Dumervil's crazy stats (20 sacks) is Central Michigan's Dan Bazuin, who finished second to Dumervil last season with 16 sacks. Bazuin will have a chance for major honors, even though he's from a mid-level MAC team.

It sure helps to play for one of college football's big boys, which gives Notre Dame's Tom Zbikowski a chance. He's not necessarily the best defensive back around, but he has a knack for big plays and is always on TV ... hey, that all plays a part in these kinds of awards.

1. Paul Posluszny	LB	Penn State
2. Rufus Alexander	LB	Oklahoma
3. Quentin Moses	DE	Georgia
4. Patrick Willis	LB	Ole Miss
5. Leon Hall	CB	Michigan
6. Tom Zbikowski	DB	Notre Dame
7. Gaines Adams	DE	Clemson
8. Dan Bazuin	DE	Central Michigan
9. Darrelle Revis	CB	Pittsburgh
10. Adam Carriker	DE	Nebraska

Conference of quarterbacks?

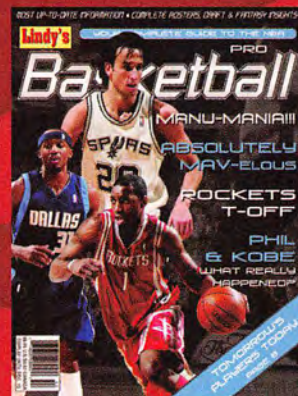
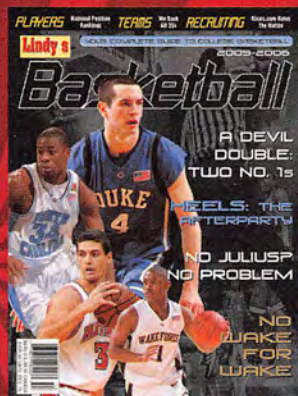
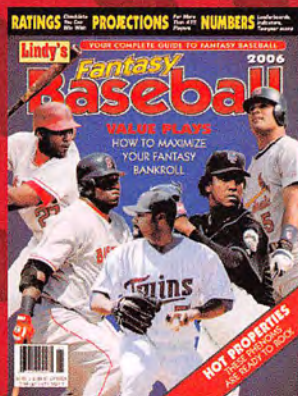
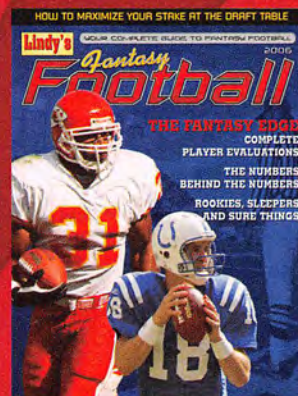
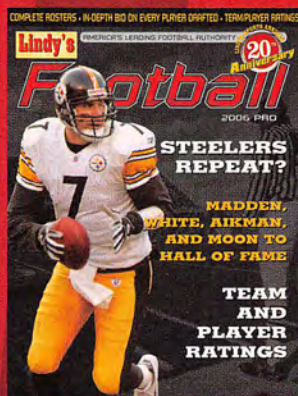
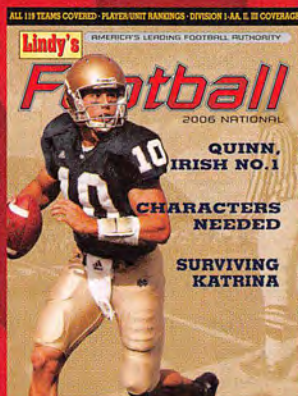
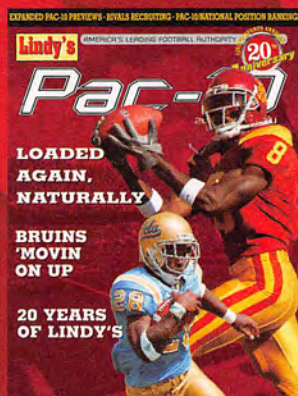
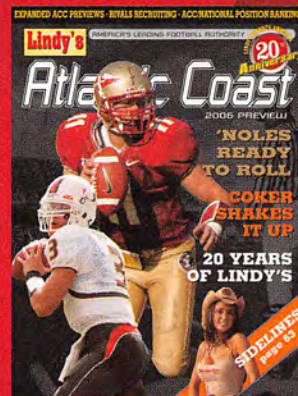
That designation is the domain of the Pac-10, but not this year. The Big Ten is the league with the most and the best quarterbacks ... even more so if you throw in the conference's "12th team," Notre Dame and its Heisman favorite.

Ohio State's **Troy Smith** (left) leads a Big Ten group that includes Michigan State's Drew Stanton, Michigan's Chad Henne, Iowa's Drew Tate, Wisconsin's John Stocco, Minnesota's Bryan Cupito and other promising passers, including Penn State's Anthony Morelli.

So while last season was the Year of the Linebacker in the Big Ten (A.J. Hawk, Bobby Carpenter, Chad Greenway, Abdul Hodge, **Paul Posluszny**), it is only Penn State's Posluszny (left) who returns to track down Smith and the swellest group of quarterbacks in the country.



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KEEPING THE FAITH

By Bill Sorrell

Like Moses at the Red Sea, security cleared a path at the Pittsburgh Steelers' Super Bowl hotel in Pontiac, Mich., for a long-hair, bearded football player.

As cameras flashed and fans applauded, walking through the Marriott lobby was — Blake Butler.

"It was kind of embarrassing," said Butler of the red carpet-treatment he received almost everywhere he went the weekend of Super Bowl XL in Detroit.

Fans thought they were seeing the Steelers' long-hair, bearded quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

"He and Ben kind of favor. They have the same hair color and expression," said Keith Butler, Blake's father and Steelers linebacker coach.

Butler grew the look last summer. "I'm not trying to look like him," he said. At the game, he was asked if he were Roethlisberger's brother.

"I'm glad he shaved his beard off after the Super Bowl, so I won't get hassled like that," said Butler, a senior offensive lineman at the University of Memphis.

The Steelers defeated the team for which Keith Butler played linebacker for 10 years, the Seattle Seahawks. An All-America linebacker at Memphis from 1974-77, Butler also coached the Cleveland Browns from 1999-2002.

While winning the Super Bowl was a 17-year career goal, it won't make his father die a happy man, said Blake. "It was a blessing. It wasn't something that defines his life."

What defines Keith's life is his relationship with Jesus Christ. Like father, like son.

"Jesus is who I define myself by now. I try to be as open with my faith as I can," said Blake. "It's hard to grasp everything He did on the cross; how much He suffered taking on the sins of the world. It was a non-repayable debt."

Blake's first examples of faith were his mother, Janet, and Keith. Blake's relationship with Christ and his understanding of what the cross meant grew as he observed how Keith witnessed to his father, John Butler, when he was near death.

"That set the bar for me. I realized what being a Christian is all about. It's not do's or don't's, it's about sharing the love of Christ," said Blake.

Later, Blake witnessed to his maternal grandfather, Bob Sink, when he was given a 50-50 chance to live in January 2004. Bob Sink was a Christian, a fact that brought comfort when he died in January 2005.

"Anytime a parent can leave something with your child that is going to last forever, something that you know is the most important thing in life and the only thing that really counts, that is significant," said Keith.

"Our hope is that all our sons (Blake, Brandon, Brett) know the Lord and pass that relationship on. We try to teach that God has no grandchildren. All of us have a ministry. Blake has taken it seriously."

One of Blake's favorite verses is Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God."

Memphis deep snapper Rusty Clayton, one of Blake's roommates, said that he is grounded. "He doesn't participate in a lot of activities that normal college-age football players do. He finds pleasure in Godly things, in fellowship with other believers, in spending time with his fiancé (Allison McLeod)."

Butler knows he is being watched. "It hit me hard how many opportunities I have been given to share my faith and I wasn't using it for God. I had been using it for myself instead of glorifying God. I don't want to dishonor my savior in any way."

Memphis head football coach Tommy West said, "Blake knows the Lord has given him the ability to play football. He's got a burning desire to be a Christian and compete like crazy."

An All-Conference USA candidate, Butler (6-3, 310) helped the Tigers finish fifth nationally in rushing offense in 2005 and sparked an offensive line that allowed nine sacks, third in the nation.

Memphis quarterback Will Hudgens said, "It's a little more comforting; you feel protected."

The first day Butler was getting fitted for pads as a freshman, a "little running back" walked up to him and asked him what position he played. When he told him offensive line, he gave him a hug and introduced himself as DeAngelo Williams.

Williams became the Tigers' all-time leading rusher with 6,026 yards and holds the NCAA record for all-purpose yards with 7,575 and 34 100-yard rushing games.

The Tigers were forced to depend on the running game last season when starting quarterback Patrick Byrne broke his leg on the third play of the season. Hudgens broke his leg two games later.

"I couldn't believe it," said West, who instilled enough confidence to keep the boat afloat.

Butler said, "We found a way to win when a lot of people thought our season

was down the drain."

The Tigers went 7-5 and went to a school-record third straight bowl. They won the Motor City Bowl in Detroit, 38-31, over Akron.

The game became a family feud. Brandon Butler plays defensive end for Akron.

In February, the Tigers rallied around West, who had triple bypass heart surgery after tests showed blockage.

"Life has changed, especially in what I eat. It's cardboard with no salt and pepper," said West.

When West was fired at Clemson after the 1998 season, he said he realized how much he had to trust God. He thought it was the end of the world, he said, "but the Lord had a plan for me. I'm better off because of it."

Hudgens said the team is better off because of Butler. He admires Butler's role-model status among younger players and his ability to "shoot straight with me."

It's Butler's consistency that offensive line coach Rick Mallory admires.

"He is sure of who he is and is not trying to fit a mold. He is a good, strong Christian young man and all the characteristics that go with that. He is a breath of fresh air. He is standing up for something which is unusual for kids these days. He doesn't compromise who he is," said Mallory.

Said West, "He has everything in order, from his life, his school, his football. He's one of the finest kids I've associated with."

An all-state lineman at Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy near Cleveland, Butler would welcome the opportunity to follow his father's footsteps into the NFL.

"I wish I was 6-7 and more attractive to scouts. Football is not my entire life. I don't depend on it for my joy. My life doesn't begin and end with football. I want to be known as someone who has lived for the Lord and that God is the No. 1 priority in my life." ■



PHOTO BY JOE MURPHY

Sidelines

2006



HATS OFF, COWGIRL

Thanks to an alert cameraman at the Florida State-Miami game, FSU coed Jenn Sterger became an overnight Internet sensation. But, at heart she says she's a pizza and Monday Night Football fan.



JUST A COUNTRY GAL

University of Alabama Crimsonette Lindsay Michelle Dunn enjoys golf, country music, family and friends. Her career goal? To become part of the country music industry.

PROMOTING THE TIDE

A homestate native, Erin Faust from Oneonta is a senior at the University of Alabama. Majoring in advertising, she can help spread the good news about Tide football.





ALL 'EYES ON KYLIE

Iowa Hawkeye fans will follow the home team, but also have eyes on senior Elementary Education major Kylie Kleinhans, four-year member of the cheerleader squad.

BUSINESS IS BOOMING

Oklahoma cheerleader Erin Fincher majors in Business Marketing and wants to own her own business. Business should also be good for her favorite team. Boomer Sooner!

HALLEY'S ... A STAR

Like the comet, Virginia Cavalier cheerleader Halley Bogart lights the way for others. A history major, she is active in such groups as Student Athlete Mentors and Athletes in Action.



MANAGING MIZZOU

Brandy McDowell, a native of Greenfield, Missouri, serves on the Alumni Association Student Board. A Management student and Tiger cheerleader, she majors in Agribusiness.



CALLING THE 'CATS

Erica Leonardi calls for the 'Cats to win every Saturday. The Kentucky cheerleader came north from Alabama to study Merchandising, Apparel and Textiles.



TWO FOR TEXAS

Here's a dynamic duo pulling for the Longhorns to win another national championship. Alex Leach (left) and Mia Adams will be on the Texas sidelines this fall.



HOTTY TOTTY ... PEARL

Pearl, Miss., native Brittany Thornton, is a physical therapy major and an Ole Miss Rebelette. She is a National Dance Association instructor and interned on Broadway with a dance company last summer.



PULLING FOR THE RAIDERS

Sophomore Lyndi Smith from Linden, Texas, is a majorette for the Texas Tech Red Raider band. She majors in Marketing and Management.



STAYING IN SHAPE

Lauren Thompson twirls at Texas Tech games. The junior majors in Exercise and Sports Sciences, with a minor in Nutrition.



Sidelines

2006

BULLDOG BROADCASTER

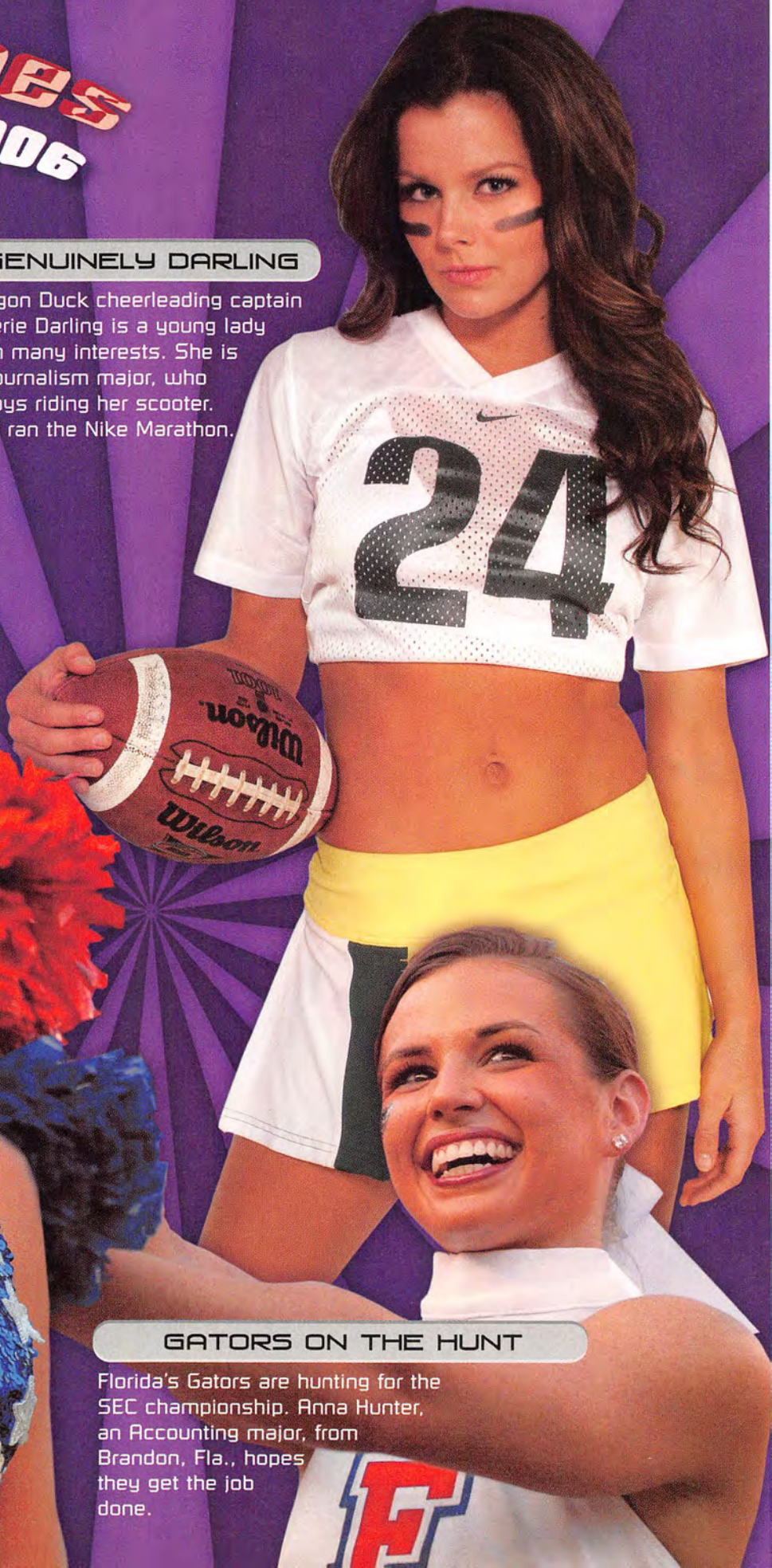
A native of Georgiana, Alabama, Michelle Lowe is a Mississippi State senior majorette. Majoring in Broadcasting, she can tell everyone about her favorite team, the Bulldogs.

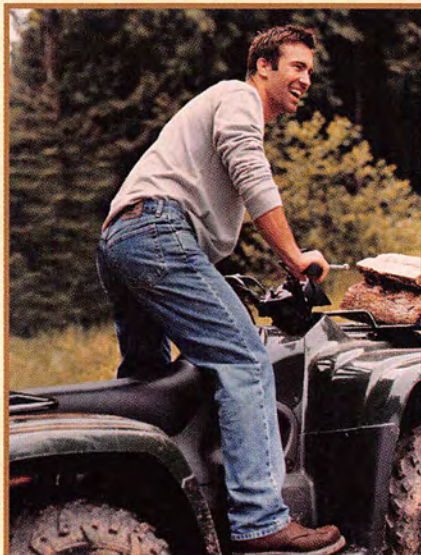
GENUINELY DARLING

Oregon Duck cheerleading captain Valerie Darling is a young lady with many interests. She is a Journalism major, who enjoys riding her scooter. She ran the Nike Marathon.

GATORS ON THE HUNT

Florida's Gators are hunting for the SEC championship. Anna Hunter, an Accounting major, from Brandon, Fla., hopes they get the job done.





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ACC

BOSTON COLLEGE

Aug. 31 at Central Michigan
Sept. 9 CLEMSON
Sept. 16 BYU
Sept. 23 at N.C. State
Sept. 30 MAINE
Oct. 12 VA. TECH
Oct. 21 at Florida State
Oct. 28 BUFFALO
Nov. 4 at Wake Forest
Nov. 11 DUKE
Nov. 18 MARYLAND
Nov. 23 at Miami (FL)

CLEMSON

Sept. 2 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 9 at Boston College
Sept. 16 at Florida State
Sept. 23 NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 30 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 7 at Wake Forest
Oct. 12 vs. Temple (Charlotte)
Oct. 21 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 26 at Virginia Tech
Nov. 4 MARYLAND
Nov. 11 N.C. STATE
Nov. 25 SOUTH CAROLINA

DUKE

Sept. 2 RICHMOND
Sept. 9 at Wake Forest
Sept. 16 at Virginia Tech
Sept. 30 VIRGINIA
Oct. 7 at Alabama
Oct. 14 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 21 MIAMI (FL)
Oct. 28 VANDERBILT
Nov. 4 NAVY
Nov. 11 at Boston College
Nov. 18 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 25 NORTH CAROLINA

FLORIDA STATE

Sept. 4 at Miami (FL)
Sept. 9 TROY
Sept. 16 CLEMSON
Sept. 23 RICE
Oct. 5 at N.C. State
Oct. 14 at Duke
Oct. 21 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 28 at Maryland
Nov. 4 VIRGINIA
Nov. 11 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 18 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 25 FLORIDA

GEORGIA TECH

Sept. 2 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 9 SAMFORD
Sept. 16 TROY
Sept. 23 VIRGINIA
Sept. 30 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 7 MARYLAND
Oct. 21 at Clemson
Oct. 28 MIAMI (FL)
Nov. 4 at N.C. State
Nov. 11 at North Carolina
Nov. 18 DUKE
Nov. 25 at Georgia

MARYLAND

Sept. 2 WILLIAM & MARY
Sept. 9 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Sept. 14 at West Virginia
Sept. 23 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Oct. 7 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 14 at Virginia
Oct. 21 N.C. STATE
Oct. 28 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 4 at Clemson

Nov. 11 MIAMI (FL)
Nov. 18 at Boston College
Nov. 25 WAKE FOREST

MIAMI (FL)

Sept. 4 FLORIDA STATE
Sept. 9 FLORIDA A&M
Sept. 16 at Louisville
Sept. 30 HOUSTON
Oct. 7 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 14 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Oct. 21 at Duke
Oct. 28 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 4 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 11 at Maryland
Nov. 18 at VIRGINIA
Nov. 23 BOSTON COLLEGE

NORTH CAROLINA

Sept. 2 RUTGERS
Sept. 9 VIRGINIA TECH
Sept. 16 FURMAN
Sept. 23 at Clemson
Oct. 7 at Miami (FL)
Oct. 14 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 19 at Virginia
Oct. 28 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 4 at NOTRE DAME
Nov. 11 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 18 N.C. STATE
Nov. 25 at Duke

NORTH CAROLINA STATE

Sept. 2 APPALACHIAN STATE
Sept. 9 AKRON
Sept. 16 at Southern Mississippi
Sept. 23 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 5 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 14 WAKE FOREST
Oct. 21 at Maryland
Oct. 28 at Virginia
Nov. 4 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 11 at Clemson
Nov. 18 at North Carolina
Nov. 25 EAST CAROLINA

VIRGINIA

Sept. 2 at Pittsburgh
Sept. 9 WYOMING
Sept. 16 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 23 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 5 at Duke
Oct. 14 MARYLAND
Oct. 19 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 28 N.C. STATE
Nov. 4 at Florida State
Nov. 18 MIAMI (FL)
Nov. 25 at Virginia Tech

VIRGINIA TECH

Sept. 2 NORTHEASTERN
Sept. 9 at North Carolina
Sept. 16 DUKE
Sept. 23 CINCINNATI
Sept. 30 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 12 at Boston College
Oct. 21 SOUTHERN MISS
Oct. 26 CLEMSON
Nov. 4 at Miami (FL)
Nov. 11 KENT STATE
Nov. 18 at Wake Forest
Nov. 25 VIRGINIA

WAKE FOREST

Sept. 2 SYRACUSE
Sept. 9 DUKE
Sept. 16 at Connecticut
Sept. 23 at Ole Miss
Sept. 30 LIBERTY
Oct. 7 CLEMSON
Oct. 14 at N.C. State
Oct. 28 at North Carolina
Nov. 4 BOSTON COLLEGE

Nov. 11 at Florida State
Nov. 18 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 25 at Maryland

BIG EAST

CINCINNATI

Sept. 2 EASTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 8 PITTSBURGH
Sept. 16 at Ohio State
Sept. 23 at Virginia Tech
Sept. 30 MIAMI (OHIO)
Oct. 7 AKRON
Oct. 14 at Louisville
Oct. 21 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 28 SYRACUSE
Nov. 11 at West Virginia
Nov. 18 RUTGERS
Nov. 25 at Connecticut

CONNECTICUT

Aug. 31 RHODE ISLAND
Sept. 16 WAKE FOREST
Sept. 23 at Indiana
Sept. 30 NAVY
Oct. 7 at South Florida
Oct. 14 ARMY
Oct. 20 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 28 at Rutgers
Nov. 11 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 18 at Syracuse
Nov. 25 CINCINNATI
Dec. 2 at Louisville

LOUISVILLE

Sept. 2 KENTUCKY
Sept. 9 at Temple
Sept. 16 MIAMI (FL)
Sept. 23 at Kansas State
Oct. 6 at Middle Tennessee
Oct. 14 CINCINNATI
Oct. 21 at Syracuse
Nov. 2 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 9 at Rutgers
Nov. 18 South Florida
Nov. 25 at Pittsburgh
Dec. 2 CONNECTICUT

PITTSBURGH

Sept. 2 VIRGINIA
Sept. 8 at Cincinnati
Sept. 16 MICHIGAN STATE
Sept. 23 THE CITADEL
Sept. 30 TOLEDO
Oct. 7 at Syracuse
Oct. 13 at UCF
Oct. 21 RUTGERS
Nov. 4 at South Florida
Nov. 11 at Connecticut
Nov. 16 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 25 LOUISVILLE

RUTGERS

Sept. 2 at North Carolina
Sept. 9 ILLINOIS
Sept. 16 OHIO
Sept. 23 HOWARD
Sept. 29 at South Florida
Oct. 14 at Navy
Oct. 21 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 28 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 9 LOUISVILLE
Nov. 18 at Cincinnati
Nov. 25 SYRACUSE
Dec. 2 at West Virginia

SOUTH FLORIDA

Sept. 2 McNEESE STATE
Sept. 9 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Sept. 16 at UCF
Sept. 23 at Kansas
Sept. 29 RUTGERS

Oct. 7 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 14 at North Carolina
Oct. 21 at Cincinnati
Nov. 4 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 11 SYRACUSE
Nov. 18 at Louisville
Nov. 25 at West Virginia

SYRACUSE

Sept. 2 at Wake Forest
Sept. 9 IOWA
Sept. 16 at Illinois
Sept. 23 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 30 WYOMING
Oct. 7 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 14 at West Virginia
Oct. 21 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 28 at Cincinnati
Nov. 11 at South Florida
Nov. 18 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 25 at Rutgers

WEST VIRGINIA

Sept. 2 MARSHALL
Sept. 9 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 14 MARYLAND
Sept. 23 at East Carolina
Oct. 7 at Mississippi State
Oct. 14 SYRACUSE
Oct. 20 at Connecticut
Nov. 2 at Louisville
Nov. 11 CINCINNATI
Nov. 16 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 25 SOUTH FLORIDA
Dec. 2 RUTGERS

BIG TEN

ILLINOIS

Sept. 2 EASTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 9 at Rutgers
Sept. 16 SYRACUSE
Sept. 23 IOWA
Sept. 30 at Michigan State
Oct. 7 INDIANA
Oct. 14 OHIO
Oct. 21 at Penn State
Oct. 28 at Wisconsin
Nov. 4 OHIO STATE
Nov. 11 PURDUE
Nov. 18 at Northwestern

INDIANA

Sept. 2 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 9 at Ball State
Sept. 16 SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 23 CONNECTICUT
Sept. 30 WISCONSIN
Oct. 7 at Illinois
Oct. 14 IOWA
Oct. 21 at Ohio State
Oct. 28 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 4 at Minnesota
Nov. 11 MICHIGAN
Nov. 18 at Purdue

IOWA

Sept. 2 MONTANA
Sept. 9 at Syracuse
Sept. 16 IOWA STATE
Sept. 23 at Illinois
Oct. 7 OHIO STATE
Oct. 14 PURDUE
Oct. 21 at Indiana
Oct. 28 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 4 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 11 WISCONSIN
Nov. 18 at Minnesota

MICHIGAN

Sept. 2 VANDERBILT
Sept. 9 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 16 at Notre Dame
Sept. 23 WISCONSIN
Sept. 30 at Minnesota
Oct. 7 MICHIGAN STATE
Oct. 14 at Penn State
Oct. 21 IOWA
Oct. 28 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 4 BALL STATE
Nov. 11 at Indiana
Nov. 18 at Ohio State

MICHIGAN STATE

Sept. 2 IDAHO
Sept. 9 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 16 at Pittsburgh
Sept. 23 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 30 ILLINOIS
Oct. 7 at Michigan
Oct. 14 OHIO STATE
Oct. 21 at Northwestern
Oct. 28 at Indiana
Nov. 4 PURDUE
Nov. 11 MINNESOTA
Nov. 18 at Penn State

MINNESOTA

Aug. 31 at Kent State
Sept. 9 at California
Sept. 16 TEMPLE
Sept. 23 at Purdue
Sept. 30 MICHIGAN
Oct. 7 PENN STATE
Oct. 14 at Wisconsin
Oct. 21 NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Oct. 28 at Ohio State
Nov. 4 INDIANA
Nov. 11 at Michigan State
Nov. 18 IOWA

NORTHWESTERN

Aug. 31 at Miami (OH)
Sept. 9 NEW HAMPSHIRE
Sept. 16 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 22 at Nevada
Sept. 30 at Penn State
Oct. 7 at Wisconsin
Oct. 14 PURDUE
Oct. 21 MICHIGAN STATE
Oct. 28 at Michigan
Nov. 4 at Iowa
Nov. 11 OHIO STATE
Nov. 18 ILLINOIS

OHIO STATE

Sept. 2 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 9 at Texas
Sept. 16 CINCINNATI
Sept. 23 PENN STATE
Sept. 30 at Iowa
Oct. 7 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 14 at Michigan State
Oct. 21 INDIANA
Oct. 28 MINNESOTA
Nov. 4 at Illinois
Nov. 11 at Northwestern
Nov. 18 MICHIGAN

PENN STATE

Sept. 2 AKRON
Sept. 9 at Notre Dame
Sept. 16 YOUNGSTOWN STATE
Sept. 23 at Ohio State
Sept. 30 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 7 at Minnesota
Oct. 14 MICHIGAN
Oct. 21 ILLINOIS
Oct. 28 at Purdue
Nov. 4 at Wisconsin
Nov. 11 TEMPLE
Nov. 18 MICHIGAN STATE

PURDUE

Sept. 2 INDIANA STATE
Sept. 9 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 16 BALL STATE
Sept. 23 MINNESOTA
Sept. 30 at Notre Dame
Oct. 7 at Iowa
Oct. 14 at Northwestern
Oct. 21 WISCONSIN
Oct. 28 PENN STATE
Nov. 4 at Michigan State
Nov. 11 at Illinois
Nov. 18 INDIANA
Nov. 25 at Hawaii

WISCONSIN

Sept. 2 vs. Bowling Green (Cleveland)
Sept. 9 WESTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 16 SAN DIEGO STATE
Sept. 23 at Michigan
Sept. 30 at Indiana
Oct. 7 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 14 MINNESOTA
Oct. 21 at Purdue
Oct. 28 ILLINOIS
Nov. 4 PENN STATE
Nov. 11 at Iowa
Nov. 18 BUFFALO

BIG 12

BAYLOR

Sept. 2 TCU
Sept. 9 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 16 vs. Wash. State (Seattle)
Sept. 23 ARMY
Sept. 30 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 7 at Colorado
Oct. 14 at Texas
Oct. 21 KANSAS
Oct. 28 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 4 at Texas Tech
Nov. 11 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 18 OKLAHOMA

COLORADO

Sept. 2 MONTANA STATE
Sept. 9 at Colorado State
Sept. 16 ARIZONA STATE

Sept. 23 at Georgia
Sept. 30 at Missouri
Oct. 7 BAYLOR
Oct. 14 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 21 at Oklahoma
Oct. 28 at Kansas
Nov. 4 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 11 IOWA STATE
Nov. 24 at Nebraska

IOWA STATE

Aug. 31 TOLEDO
Sept. 9 UNLV
Sept. 16 at Iowa
Sept. 23 at Texas
Sept. 30 NORTHERN IOWA
Oct. 7 NEBRASKA
Oct. 14 at Oklahoma
Oct. 21 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 28 at Kansas State
Nov. 4 KANSAS
Nov. 11 at Colorado
Nov. 18 MISSOURI

KANSAS

Sept. 2 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 9 LOUISIANA-MONROE
Sept. 15 at Toledo
Sept. 23 SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 30 at Nebraska
Oct. 7 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 14 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 21 at Baylor
Oct. 28 COLORADO
Nov. 4 at Iowa State
Nov. 18 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 25 at Missouri

KANSAS STATE

Sept. 2 ILLINOIS STATE
Sept. 9 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 16 MARSHALL
Sept. 23 LOUISVILLE
Sept. 30 at Baylor
Oct. 7 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 14 NEBRASKA
Oct. 21 at Missouri
Oct. 28 IOWA STATE
Nov. 4 at Colorado
Nov. 11 TEXAS
Nov. 18 at Kansas

MISSOURI

Sept. 2 MURRAY STATE
Sept. 9 OLE MISS
Sept. 16 at New Mexico
Sept. 23 OHIO
Sept. 30 COLORADO
Oct. 7 at Texas Tech
Oct. 14 at Texas A&M
Oct. 21 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 28 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 4 at Nebraska
Nov. 18 at Iowa State
Nov. 25 KANSAS

NEBRASKA

Sept. 2 LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 9 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 16 at USC
Sept. 23 TROY
Sept. 30 KANSAS
Oct. 7 at Iowa State
Oct. 14 at Kansas State
Oct. 21 TEXAS
Oct. 28 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 4 MISSOURI
Nov. 11 at Texas A&M
Nov. 24 COLORADO

OKLAHOMA

Sept. 2 UAB
Sept. 9 WASHINGTON
Sept. 16 at Oregon
Sept. 23 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 7 vs. Texas (Dallas)
Oct. 14 IOWA STATE
Oct. 21 COLORADO
Oct. 28 at Missouri
Nov. 4 at Texas A&M
Nov. 11 TEXAS TECH
Nov. 18 at Baylor
Nov. 25 at Oklahoma State

OKLAHOMA STATE

Sept. 2 MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 9 vs. Arkansas St. (Little Rock)
Sept. 16 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 23 at Houston
Oct. 7 at Kansas State
Oct. 14 at Kansas
Oct. 21 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 28 NEBRASKA
Nov. 4 at Texas
Nov. 11 BAYLOR
Nov. 18 at Texas Tech
Nov. 25 OKLAHOMA

Wrangler®

TEXAS

Sept. 2 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 9 OHIO STATE
Sept. 16 at Rice
Sept. 23 IOWA STATE
Sept. 30 SAM HOUSTON STATE
Oct. 7 vs. Oklahoma (Dallas)
Oct. 14 BAYLOR
Oct. 21 at Nebraska
Oct. 28 at Texas Tech
Nov. 4 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 11 at Kansas State
Nov. 24 TEXAS A&M

TEXAS A&M

Sept. 2 THE CITADEL
Sept. 9 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Sept. 16 vs. ARMY (San Antonio)
Sept. 23 LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 30 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 7 at Kansas
Oct. 14 MISSOURI
Oct. 21 at Oklahoma State
Oct. 28 at Baylor
Nov. 4 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 11 NEBRASKA
Nov. 24 at Texas

TEXAS TECH

Sept. 2 SMU
Sept. 9 at UTEP
Sept. 16 at TCU
Sept. 23 SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Sept. 30 at Texas A&M
Oct. 7 MISSOURI
Oct. 14 at Colorado
Oct. 21 at Iowa State
Oct. 28 TEXAS
Nov. 4 BAYLOR
Nov. 11 at Oklahoma
Nov. 18 OKLAHOMA STATE

C-USA

EAST CAROLINA

Sept. 2 at Navy
Sept. 9 at UAB
Sept. 16 MEMPHIS
Sept. 23 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 7 VIRGINIA
Oct. 14 TULSA
Oct. 21 SMU
Oct. 28 at Southern Mississippi
Nov. 4 at UCF
Nov. 11 MARSHALL
Nov. 18 at Rice
Nov. 25 at N.C. State

HOUSTON

Sept. 2 at Rice
Sept. 9 TULANE
Sept. 16 GRAMBLING STATE
Sept. 23 OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 30 at Louisiana (FL)
Oct. 7 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Oct. 14 at Southern Miss
Oct. 21 UTEP
Oct. 28 UCF
Nov. 4 TULSA
Nov. 11 at SMU
Nov. 18 at Memphis

MARSHALL

Sept. 2 at West Virginia
Sept. 9 HOFSTRA
Sept. 16 at Kansas State
Sept. 23 at Tennessee
Oct. 4 UCF
Oct. 14 at SMU
Oct. 21 at UAB
Oct. 28 MEMPHIS
Nov. 4 TULANE
Nov. 11 at East Carolina

UTEP

Nov. 18 at Southern Miss

MEMPHIS

Sept. 2 at Ole Miss
Sept. 9 CHATTANOOGA
Sept. 16 at East Carolina
Sept. 30 TENNESSEE
Oct. 7 at UAB
Oct. 14 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 21 TULSA
Oct. 28 at Marshall
Nov. 4 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 11 UCF
Nov. 18 HOUSTON
Nov. 25 at UTEP

RICE

Sept. 2 HOUSTON
Sept. 9 at UCLA
Sept. 16 TEXAS
Sept. 23 at Florida State
Sept. 30 at Tulane
Oct. 7 at UAB
Oct. 21 at UCF
Nov. 4 at UTEP
Nov. 11 at Tulsa
Nov. 18 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 25 SMU

SOUTHERN MISS

Sept. 2 at Florida
Sept. 9 SE LOUISIANA
Sept. 16 N.C. STATE
Sept. 26 at UCF
Oct. 3 at Tulsa
Oct. 14 HOUSTON
Oct. 21 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 28 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 4 at Memphis
Nov. 11 at Tulane
Nov. 18 UAB
Nov. 25 MARSHALL

SMU

Sept. 2 at Texas Tech
Sept. 9 at North Texas
Sept. 16 SAM HOUSTON STATE
Sept. 23 ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 30 at Tulane
Oct. 7 at UTEP
Oct. 14 MARSHALL
Oct. 21 at East Carolina
Oct. 31 UAB
Nov. 11 HOUSTON
Nov. 18 TULSA
Nov. 25 at Rice

TULANE

Sept. 9 at Houston
Sept. 16 at Mississippi State
Sept. 23 at LSU
Sept. 30 SMU
Oct. 7 RICE
Oct. 14 at UTEP
Oct. 21 at Auburn
Oct. 28 ARMY
Nov. 4 at Marshall
Nov. 11 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 18 UCF
Nov. 25 at Tulsa

TULSA

Aug. 31 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Sept. 9 at BYU
Sept. 16 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 23 at Navy
Oct. 3 SOUTHERN MISS
Oct. 14 at East Carolina
Oct. 21 at Memphis
Oct. 27 UTEP
Nov. 4 at Houston
Nov. 11 RICE
Nov. 18 at SMU
Nov. 25 TULANE

UAB

Sept. 2 at Oklahoma
Sept. 9 EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 16 at Georgia
Sept. 23 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 30 TROY
Oct. 7 MEMPHIS
Oct. 14 at Rice
Oct. 21 MARSHALL
Oct. 31 at SMU
Nov. 10 UTEP
Nov. 18 at Southern Miss
Nov. 25 at UCF

UCF

Sept. 2 VILLANOVA
Sept. 9 at Florida
Sept. 16 SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 26 SOUTHERN MISS
Oct. 4 at Marshall
Oct. 11 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 21 RICE
Oct. 28 at Houston
Nov. 4 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 11 at Memphis
Nov. 18 at Tulane
Nov. 25 UAB

UTEP

Aug. 31 at San Diego State
Sept. 9 TEXAS TECH
Sept. 23 at New Mexico
Sept. 30 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 7 SMU
Oct. 14 TULANE
Oct. 21 at Houston
Oct. 27 at Tulsa
Nov. 4 RICE
Nov. 10 at UAB
Nov. 18 at Marshall
Nov. 25 MEMPHIS

I-A INDEPENDENTS

ARMY

Sept. 2 at Arkansas State
Sept. 9 KENT STATE
Sept. 16 vs. Texas A&M (San Antonio)
Sept. 23 at Baylor
Sept. 30 RICE
Oct. 7 VMI
Oct. 14 at Connecticut
Oct. 21 TCU
Oct. 28 at Tulane
Nov. 4 AIR FORCE
Nov. 18 at Notre Dame
Dec. 2 vs. Navy (Philadelphia)

NAVY

Sept. 2 EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 9 UMASS
Sept. 16 at Stanford
Sept. 23 TULSA
Sept. 30 at Connecticut
Oct. 7 at Air Force
Oct. 14 RUTGERS
Oct. 21 vs. Notre Dame (Baltimore)
Nov. 4 at Duke
Nov. 11 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 18 TEMPLE
Dec. 2 vs. Army (Philadelphia)

NOTRE DAME

Sept. 2 at Georgia Tech
Sept. 9 PENN STATE
Sept. 16 MICHIGAN
Sept. 23 at Michigan State
Sept. 30 PURDUE
Oct. 7 STANFORD

Oct. 21 UCLA
Oct. 28 at Navy (Baltimore)
Nov. 4 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 11 at Air Force
Nov. 18 ARMY
Nov. 25 at USC

TEMPLE

Aug. 31 at Buffalo
Sept. 9 LOUISVILLE
Sept. 16 at Minnesota
Sept. 23 at Western Michigan
Sept. 30 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 7 KENT STATE
Oct. 14 vs. Clemson (Charlotte)
Oct. 21 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 28 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 4 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 11 at Penn State
Nov. 18 at Navy

MAC

AKRON

Sept. 2 at Penn State
Sept. 9 at North Carolina State
Sept. 16 at Central Michigan
Sept. 23 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 30 at Kent State
Oct. 7 at Cincinnati
Oct. 21 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 28 at Toledo
Nov. 4 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 9 BUFFALO
Nov. 16 at Ohio
Nov. 24 WESTERN MICHIGAN

BALL STATE

Aug. 31 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 9 INDIANA
Sept. 16 at Purdue
Sept. 23 NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Sept. 30 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 7 at Buffalo
Oct. 14 at Central Michigan
Oct. 21 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 28 at Miami (OH)
Nov. 4 at Michigan
Nov. 14 at Toledo
Nov. 24 KENT STATE

BOWLING GREEN

Sept. 2 vs. Wisconsin (Cleveland)
Sept. 9 BUFFALO
Sept. 16 at Florida International
Sept. 23 KENT STATE
Sept. 30 at Ohio
Oct. 7 at Ohio State
Oct. 14 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 19 at Central Michigan
Oct. 28 at Temple
Nov. 4 at Akron
Nov. 15 MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 21 at Toledo

BUFFALO

Aug. 31 TEMPLE
Sept. 9 at Bowling Green
Sept. 16 at Northern Illinois
Sept. 23 at Auburn
Oct. 7 BALL STATE
Oct. 14 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 21 at Ohio
Oct. 28 at Boston College
Nov. 4 KENT STATE
Nov. 9 at Akron
Nov. 16 at Wisconsin
Nov. 24 CENTRAL MICHIGAN

CENTRAL MICHIGAN

Aug. 31 BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 9 at Michigan
Sept. 16 AKRON
Sept. 23 at Eastern Michigan
Sept. 30 at Kentucky
Oct. 7 at Toledo
Oct. 14 BALL STATE
Oct. 19 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 4 at Temple
Nov. 10 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 17 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 24 at Buffalo

EASTERN MICHIGAN

Aug. 31 at Ball State
Sept. 9 at Michigan State
Sept. 16 at Northwestern
Sept. 23 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 30 at Louisiana-Lafayette
Oct. 14 at Bowling Green
Oct. 21 TOLEDO
Oct. 28 at Western Michigan
Nov. 4 OHIO
Nov. 11 NAVY
Nov. 18 at Kent State
Nov. 24 NORTHERN ILLINOIS

KENT STATE

Aug. 31 MINNESOTA
Sept. 9 at Army
Sept. 16 at Miami (OH)
Sept. 23 at Bowling Green
Sept. 30 AKRON
Oct. 7 at Temple
Oct. 14 TOLEDO
Oct. 28 OHIO
Nov. 4 at Buffalo
Nov. 11 at Virginia Tech
Nov. 18 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 24 at Ball State

MIAMI (OH)

Aug. 31 NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 9 at Purdue
Sept. 16 KENT STATE
Sept. 23 at Syracuse
Sept. 30 at Cincinnati
Oct. 7 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 14 at Buffalo
Oct. 21 at Akron
Oct. 28 BALL STATE
Nov. 4 at Western Michigan
Nov. 15 at Bowling Green
Nov. 24 OHIO

NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Sept. 2 at Ohio State
Sept. 9 OHIO
Sept. 16 BUFFALO
Sept. 23 INDIANA STATE
Sept. 30 at Ball State
Oct. 7 at Miami (OH)
Oct. 14 at Western Michigan
Oct. 21 TEMPLE
Oct. 28 at Iowa
Nov. 7 TOLEDO
Nov. 17 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 24 at Eastern Michigan

OHIO

Sept. 2 TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Sept. 9 at Northern Illinois
Sept. 16 at Rutgers
Sept. 23 at Missouri
Sept. 30 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 7 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 14 at Illinois
Oct. 21 BUFFALO
Oct. 28 at Kent State
Nov. 4 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 16 AKRON
Nov. 24 at Miami (OH)

TOLEDO

Aug. 31 at Iowa State
Sept. 9 at Western Michigan
Sept. 15 KANSAS
Sept. 23 MCNEESE STATE
Sept. 30 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 7 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 14 at Kent State
Oct. 21 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 28 AKRON
Nov. 7 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 14 BALL STATE
Nov. 21 BOWLING GREEN

WESTERN MICHIGAN

Sept. 2 at Indiana
Sept. 9 TOLEDO
Sept. 16 at Virginia
Sept. 23 TEMPLE
Oct. 7 at Ohio
Oct. 14 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 21 at Ball State
Oct. 28 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 4 MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 10 at Central Michigan
Nov. 18 at Florida State
Nov. 24 at Akron

MOUNTAIN WEST

AIR FORCE

Sept. 9 at Tennessee
Sept. 23 at Wyoming
Sept. 30 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 7 NAVY
Oct. 12 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 21 at San Diego State
Oct. 28 BYU
Nov. 4 at Army
Nov. 11 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 18 UTAH
Nov. 24 at UNLV
Dec. 2 at TCU

BYU

Sept. 2 at Arizona
Sept. 9 TULSA
Sept. 16 at Boston College

Sept. 23 UTAH STATE
Sept. 28 at TCU
Oct. 7 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 21 UNLV
Oct. 28 at Air Force
Nov. 4 at Colorado State
Nov. 9 WYOMING
Nov. 18 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 25 at Utah

COLORADO STATE

Sept. 2 WEBER STATE
Sept. 9 at Colorado
Sept. 16 at Nevada
Sept. 30 at Fresno State
Oct. 7 UNLV
Oct. 12 at Air Force
Oct. 21 at Wyoming
Oct. 28 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 4 BYU
Nov. 11 at Utah
Nov. 25 TCU
Dec. 2 at San Diego State

NEW MEXICO

Sept. 2 PORTLAND STATE
Sept. 9 at New Mexico State
Sept. 16 MISSOURI
Sept. 23 UTEP
Sept. 30 at Air Force
Oct. 7 WYOMING
Oct. 14 at UNLV
Oct. 19 UTAH
Oct. 28 at Colorado State
Nov. 11 TCU
Nov. 18 at BYU
Nov. 25 SAN DIEGO STATE

SAN DIEGO STATE

Aug. 31 UTEP
Sept. 16 at Wisconsin
Sept. 23 UTAH
Sept. 30 at San Jose State
Oct. 7 at BYU
Oct. 21 AIR FORCE
Oct. 28 CAL POLY
Nov. 4 at Wyoming
Nov. 11 UNLV
Nov. 18 at TCU
Nov. 25 at New Mexico
Dec. 2 COLORADO STATE

TCU

Sept. 2 at Baylor
Sept. 9 UC Davis
Sept. 16 TEXAS TECH
Sept. 28 BYU
Oct. 5 at Utah
Oct. 21 at Army
Oct. 28 WYOMING
Nov. 4 at UNLV
Nov. 11 at New Mexico
Nov. 18 SAN DIEGO STATE
Nov. 25 at Colorado State
Dec. 2 AIR FORCE

UNLV

Sept. 2 IDAHO STATE
Sept. 9 at Iowa State
Sept. 16 at Hawaii
Sept. 30 NEVADA
Oct. 7 at Colorado State
Oct. 14 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 21 at BYU
Oct. 28 at Utah
Nov. 4 TCU
Nov. 11 at San Diego State
Nov. 18 WYOMING
Nov. 24 AIR FORCE

UTAH

Sept. 2 at UCLA
Sept. 9 NORTHERN ARIZONA
Sept. 16 at Utah State
Sept. 23 at San Diego State
Sept. 30 BOISE STATE
Oct. 5 TCU
Oct. 14 at Wyoming
Oct. 19 at New Mexico
Oct. 28 UNLV
Nov. 11 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 18 at Air Force
Nov. 25 BYU

WYOMING

Sept. 2 UTAH STATE
Sept. 9 at Virginia
Sept. 16 BOISE STATE
Sept. 23 AIR FORCE
Sept. 30 at Syracuse
Oct. 7 at New Mexico
Oct. 14 UTAH
Oct. 21 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 28 at TCU
Nov. 4 SAN DIEGO STATE
Nov. 9 at BYU
Nov. 18 at UNLV

PAC-10

ARIZONA

Sept. 2 BYU
Sept. 9 at LSU
Sept. 16 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Sept. 23 USC
Sept. 30 WASHINGTON
Oct. 7 at UCLA
Oct. 14 at Stanford
Oct. 21 OREGON STATE
Nov. 4 at Washington State
Nov. 11 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 18 at Oregon
Nov. 25 ARIZONA STATE

ARIZONA STATE

Aug. 31 NORTHERN ARIZONA
Sept. 9 NEVADA
Sept. 16 at Colorado
Sept. 23 at California
Sept. 30 OREGON
Oct. 14 at USC
Oct. 21 STANFORD
Oct. 28 at Washington
Nov. 4 at Oregon State
Nov. 11 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 18 UCLA
Nov. 25 at Arizona

CALIFORNIA

Sept. 2 at Tennessee
Sept. 9 MINNESOTA
Sept. 16 PORTLAND STATE
Sept. 23 ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 30 at Oregon State
Oct. 7 OREGON
Oct. 14 at Washington State
Oct. 21 WASHINGTON
Nov. 4 UCLA
Nov. 11 at Arizona
Nov. 18 at USC
Dec. 2 STANFORD

OREGON

Sept. 2 STANFORD
Sept. 9 at Fresno State
Sept. 16 OKLAHOMA
Sept. 30 at Arizona State
Oct. 7 at California
Oct. 14 UCLA
Oct. 21 at Washington State
Oct. 28 PORTLAND STATE
Nov. 4 WASHINGTON
Nov. 11 at USC
Nov. 18 ARIZONA
Nov. 25 at Oregon State

OREGON STATE

Aug. 31 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 7 at Boise State
Sept. 23 IDAHO
Sept. 30 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 7 WASHINGTON STATE
Oct. 14 at Washington
Oct. 21 at Arizona
Oct. 28 USC
Nov. 4 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 11 at UCLA
Nov. 18 at Stanford
Nov. 25 OREGON
Dec. 2 at Hawaii

STANFORD

Sept. 2 at Oregon
Sept. 9 at San Jose State
Sept. 16 NAVY
Sept. 23 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 30 at UCLA
Oct. 7 at Notre Dame
Oct. 14 ARIZONA
Oct. 21 at Arizona State
Nov. 4 USC
Nov. 11 at Washington
Nov. 18 OREGON STATE
Dec. 2 at California

UCLA

Sept. 2 UTAH
Sept. 9 RICE
Sept. 23 at Washington
Sept. 30 STANFORD
Oct. 7 ARIZONA
Oct. 14 at Oregon
Oct. 21 at Notre Dame
Oct. 28 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 4 at California
Nov. 11 OREGON STATE
Nov. 18 at Arizona State
Dec. 2 USC

USC

Sept. 2 at Arkansas
Sept. 16 NEBRASKA

Sept. 23 at Arizona
Sept. 30 at Washington State
Oct. 7 WASHINGTON
Oct. 14 ARIZONA STATE
Oct. 28 at Oregon State
Nov. 4 at Stanford
Nov. 11 OREGON
Nov. 18 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 25 NOTRE DAME
Dec. 2 at UCLA

WASHINGTON

Sept. 2 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 9 at Oklahoma
Sept. 16 FRESNO STATE
Sept. 23 UCLA
Sept. 30 at Arizona
Oct. 7 at USC
Oct. 14 OREGON STATE
Oct. 21 at California
Oct. 28 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 4 at Oregon
Nov. 11 STANFORD
Nov. 18 at Washington State

WASHINGTON STATE

Sept. 2 at Auburn
Sept. 9 IDAHO
Sept. 16 vs. Baylor (Seattle)
Sept. 23 at Stanford
Sept. 30 USC
Oct. 7 at Oregon State
Oct. 14 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 21 OREGON
Oct. 28 at UCLA
Nov. 4 ARIZONA
Nov. 11 at Arizona State
Nov. 18 WASHINGTON

SEC

ALABAMA

Sept. 2 HAWAII
Sept. 9 VANDERBILT
Sept. 16 LOUISIANA-MONROE
Sept. 23 at Arkansas
Sept. 30 at Florida
Oct. 7 DUKE
Oct. 14 OLE MISS
Oct. 21 at Tennessee
Oct. 28 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Nov. 4 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Nov. 11 at LSU
Nov. 18 AUBURN

ARKANSAS

Sept. 2 USC
Sept. 9 UTAH STATE
Sept. 16 at Vanderbilt
Sept. 23 ALABAMA
Oct. 7 at Auburn
Oct. 14 S.E. MISSOURI STATE
Oct. 21 OLE MISS
Oct. 28 UL-MONROE (Little Rock)
Nov. 4 at South Carolina
Nov. 11 TENNESSEE
Nov. 18 at Mississippi State
Nov. 25 LSU

AUBURN

Sept. 2 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 9 at Mississippi State
Sept. 16 LSU
Sept. 23 BUFFALO
Sept. 28 at South Carolina
Oct. 7 ARKANSAS
Oct. 14 FLORIDA
Oct. 21 TULANE
Oct. 28 at Ole Miss
Nov. 4 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 11 GEORGIA
Nov. 18 at Alabama

FLORIDA

Sept. 2 SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
Sept. 9 UCF
Sept. 16 at Tennessee
Sept. 23 KENTUCKY
Sept. 30 ALABAMA
Oct. 7 LSU
Oct. 14 at Auburn
Oct. 21 vs. Georgia (Jacksonville)
Nov. 4 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 11 SOUTH CAROLINA
Nov. 18 WESTERN CAROLINA
Nov. 25 at Florida State

GEORGIA

Sept. 2 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 9 at South Carolina
Sept. 16 UAB

Sept. 23 COLORADO
Sept. 30 at Ole Miss
Oct. 7 TENNESSEE
Oct. 14 VANDERBILT
Oct. 21 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Oct. 28 vs. Florida (Jacksonville)
Nov. 4 at Kentucky
Nov. 11 at Auburn
Nov. 25 GEORGIA TECH

KENTUCKY

Sept. 2 at Louisville
Sept. 9 TEXAS STATE
Sept. 16 OLE MISS
Sept. 23 at Florida
Sept. 30 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 7 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 14 at LSU
Oct. 21 at Mississippi State
Nov. 4 GEORGIA
Nov. 11 VANDERBILT
Nov. 18 LOUISIANA-MONROE
Nov. 25 at Tennessee

LSU

Sept. 2 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Sept. 9 ARIZONA
Sept. 16 at Auburn
Sept. 23 TULANE
Sept. 30 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Oct. 7 at Florida
Oct. 14 KENTUCKY
Oct. 21 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 4 at Tennessee
Nov. 11 ALABAMA
Nov. 18 OLE MISS
Nov. 25 at Arkansas

OLE MISS

Sept. 2 MEMPHIS
Sept. 9 at Missouri
Sept. 16 at Kentucky
Sept. 23 WAKE FOREST
Sept. 30 GEORGIA
Oct. 7 VANDERBILT
Oct. 14 at Alabama
Oct. 21 at Arkansas
Oct. 28 AUBURN
Nov. 4 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Nov. 18 at LSU
Nov. 25 MISSISSIPPI STATE

MISSISSIPPI STATE

Aug. 31 SOUTH CAROLINA
Sept. 9 AUBURN
Sept. 16 TULANE
Sept. 23 at UAB
Sept. 30 at LSU
Oct. 7 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 14 JACKSONVILLE STATE
Oct. 21 at Georgia
Oct. 28 KENTUCKY
Nov. 4 at Alabama
Nov. 18 ARKANSAS
Nov. 25 at Ole Miss

SOUTH CAROLINA

Aug. 31 at Mississippi State
Sept. 9 GEORGIA
Sept. 16 WOFFORD
Sept. 23 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Oct. 7 at Kentucky
Oct. 21 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 28 TENNESSEE
Nov. 4 ARKANSAS
Nov. 11 at Florida
Nov. 18 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 25 at Clemson

TENNESSEE

Sept. 2 CALIFORNIA
Sept. 9 AIR FORCE
Sept. 16 FLORIDA
Sept. 23 MARSHALL
Sept. 30 at Memphis
Oct. 7 at Georgia
Oct. 21 ALABAMA
Oct. 28 at South Carolina
Nov. 4 LSU
Nov. 11 at Arkansas
Nov. 18 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 25 KENTUCKY

VANDERBILT

Sept. 2 at Michigan
Sept. 9 at Alabama
Sept. 16 ARKANSAS
Sept. 23 TENNESSEE STATE
Sept. 30 TEMPLE
Oct. 7 at Ole Miss
Oct. 14 at Georgia
Oct. 21 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 28 at Duke

Wrangler®

Nov. 4 FLORIDA
Nov. 11 at Kentucky
Nov. 18 TENNESSEE

SUN BELT

ARKANSAS STATE

Sept. 2 ARMY
Sept. 9 vs. Oklahoma St. (Little Rock)
Sept. 16 at SMU
Sept. 23 at Florida International
Oct. 7 LOUISIANA-MONROE
Oct. 14 at Memphis
Oct. 21 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 28 at Florida Atlantic
Nov. 4 at Auburn
Nov. 11 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 18 at Troy
Nov. 25 at Louisiana-Lafayette

FLORIDA ATLANTIC

Sept. 2 at Clemson
Sept. 9 at Kansas State
Sept. 16 at Oklahoma State
Sept. 23 at South Carolina
Sept. 30 at Louisiana-Monroe
Oct. 7 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Oct. 14 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 4 at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 11 TROY
Nov. 18 at North Texas
Nov. 25 FLORIDA INTL. (Miami)

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL

Aug. 31 at Middle Tennessee
Sept. 9 at South Florida
Sept. 16 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 23 at Maryland
Sept. 30 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 7 at North Texas
Oct. 14 at Miami (FL)
Oct. 21 at Alabama
Nov. 11 LOUISIANA-MONROE
Nov. 18 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Nov. 25 at Florida Atlantic (Miami)
Dec. 2 TROY

LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Sept. 2 at LSU
Sept. 9 at Texas A&M
Sept. 16 TBD
Sept. 30 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 7 at Houston
Oct. 14 at Florida Atlantic
Oct. 21 at Troy
Nov. 11 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 18 at Florida International
Nov. 25 ARKANSAS STATE
Dec. 2 LOUISIANA-MONROE

LOUISIANA-MONROE

Sept. 2 ALCORN STATE
Sept. 9 at Kansas
Sept. 16 at Alabama
Sept. 30 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Oct. 7 at Arkansas State
Oct. 14 at Troy
Oct. 21 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 28 Arkansas (in Little Rock)
Nov. 11 at Florida International
Nov. 18 at Kentucky
Nov. 25 NORTH TEXAS
Dec. 2 at Louisiana-Lafayette

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Aug. 31 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Sept. 9 at Maryland
Sept. 14 TENNESSEE TECH
Sept. 23 at Oklahoma
Sept. 30 at North Texas

Oct. 6 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 21 at Louisiana-Monroe
Oct. 28 at Louisiana-Lafayette
Nov. 4 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 11 at Arkansas State
Nov. 18 at South Carolina
Nov. 25 TROY

NORTH TEXAS

Sept. 2 at Texas
Sept. 9 SMU
Sept. 16 at Tulsa
Sept. 23 at Akron
Sept. 30 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 7 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Oct. 21 at Arkansas State
Oct. 28 at Troy
Nov. 4 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 11 at Louisiana-Lafayette
Nov. 18 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 25 at Louisiana-Monroe

TROY

Sept. 2 ALABAMA STATE
Sept. 9 at Florida State
Sept. 16 at Georgia Tech
Sept. 23 at Nebraska
Sept. 30 at UAB
Oct. 14 LOUISIANA-MONROE
Oct. 21 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 4 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Nov. 11 at Florida Atlantic
Nov. 18 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 25 at Middle Tennessee
Dec. 2 at Florida International

WAC

BOISE STATE

Aug. 31 SACRAMENTO STATE
Sept. 7 OREGON STATE
Sept. 16 at Wyoming
Sept. 23 HAWAII
Sept. 30 at Utah
Oct. 7 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 14 at New Mexico State
Oct. 21 at Idaho
Nov. 1 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 11 at San Jose State
Nov. 18 UTAH STATE
Nov. 25 at Nevada

FRESNO STATE

Sept. 1 NEVADA
Sept. 9 OREGON
Sept. 16 at Washington
Sept. 30 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 7 at Utah State
Oct. 14 HAWAII
Oct. 21 at LSU
Nov. 1 at Boise State
Nov. 11 NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 18 IDAHO
Dec. 2 at Louisiana Tech
Dec. 2 at San Jose State

HAWAII

Sept. 2 at Alabama
Sept. 16 UNLV
Sept. 23 at Boise State
Sept. 30 EASTERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 7 NEVADA
Oct. 14 at Fresno State
Oct. 21 at New Mexico State
Oct. 28 IDAHO
Nov. 4 at Utah State
Nov. 11 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 18 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 25 PURDUE
Dec. 2 OREGON STATE

IDAHO

Sept. 2 at Michigan State
Sept. 9 at Washington State
Sept. 16 IDAHO STATE
Sept. 23 at Oregon State
Sept. 30 at Utah State
Oct. 7 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 14 at Louisiana Tech
Oct. 21 BOISE STATE
Oct. 28 at Hawaii
Nov. 4 NEVADA
Nov. 18 at Fresno State
Nov. 25 SAN JOSE STATE

LOUISIANA TECH

Sept. 2 at Nebraska
Sept. 16 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 23 at Texas A&M
Sept. 30 at Clemson
Oct. 7 at Boise State
Oct. 14 IDAHO
Oct. 21 UTAH STATE
Oct. 28 at San Jose State
Nov. 4 at North Texas
Nov. 11 at Hawaii
Nov. 18 NEVADA
Nov. 24 FRESNO STATE
Dec. 2 at New Mexico State

NEVADA

Sept. 1 at Fresno State
Sept. 9 at Arizona State
Sept. 16 COLORADO STATE
Sept. 22 NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 30 at UNLV
Oct. 7 at Hawaii
Oct. 21 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 28 NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 4 at Idaho
Nov. 11 UTAH STATE
Nov. 18 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 25 BOISE STATE

NEW MEXICO STATE

Aug. 31 SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Sept. 9 NEW MEXICO
Sept. 16 TEXAS SOUTHERN
Sept. 30 at UTEP
Oct. 7 at Idaho
Oct. 14 BOISE STATE
Oct. 21 HAWAII
Oct. 28 at Nevada
Nov. 4 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 11 at Fresno State
Nov. 25 at Utah State
Dec. 2 LOUISIANA TECH

SAN JOSE STATE

Sept. 9 at Washington
Sept. 16 at Arizona State
Sept. 23 CAL POLY
Sept. 30 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 14 UTAH STATE
Oct. 21 at Nevada
Oct. 28 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 4 at New Mexico State
Nov. 11 BOISE STATE
Nov. 18 at Hawaii
Nov. 25 at Idaho
Dec. 2 FRESNO STATE

UTAH STATE

Sept. 2 at Wyoming
Sept. 9 at Arkansas
Sept. 16 UTAH
Sept. 23 at BYU
Sept. 30 IDAHO
Oct. 7 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 14 at San Jose State
Oct. 21 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 4 HAWAII
Nov. 11 at Nevada
Nov. 18 at Boise State
Nov. 25 NEW MEXICO STATE

NATIONAL RECRUITING

By Mike Farrell
Rivals.com



1 Southern California

QB-1, RB-4, WR-3, TE-2, OL-1, DL-4, LB-3, DB-4, ATH-3, ST-0

Despite falling just short of another national championship in the Rose Bowl, Southern California still came away with a title 2006 on the recruiting trail. For the third year in a row, the Trojans landed the top recruiting class in the country compiling a group of 25 players that includes 19 four- and five-star prospects as ranked by Rivals.com. Of those, USC landed the top six players in the state of California and plucked star players from other states including Utah, Washington, Colorado, Virginia, Texas and New Jersey.

Pete Carroll's 2006 haul includes the nation's top outside linebacker, **Allen Bradford**, the No. 2 rated running back in the country, **Stefon Johnson**, and the No. 2 receiver in the country in **Vidal Hazelton**. The 5-11, 219-pound Bradford was a force as a senior registering 157 tackles and 12 sacks. He is also a capable running back who might draw consideration on offense after he posted 1,869 yards and 29 touchdowns last season. Another player that could help fill the void left by Reggie Bush and LenDale White is the 5-11, 200-pound Johnson who has a good combination of size and speed and rushed for 1,866 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior. Meanwhile, Hazelton is a big, athletic receiver that can go up and get the ball. He had 1,700 yards receiving and 30 touchdowns over the last two seasons.

Southern California had plenty of success elsewhere including picking up four defensive backs to help lend depth to a position that was a big question mark all year for the Trojans. The leading candidates who figure to step in immediately include the No. 2 safety in the country **Antwine Perez** and the No. 2 cornerback in **Shareece Wright**. A few other players that could see the field at a variety of positions for the Trojans in 2006 are three of the top four athletes in the country including **Taylor Mays**, **C.J. Gable** and **Jamere Holland**.



2 Florida

QB-1, RB-2, WR-2, TE-1, OL-4, DL-5, LB-3, DB-2, ATH-5, ST-0

After his first season with the Gators, Urban Meyer made a strong run on the recruiting trail and came away with the No. 2 recruiting class in the country. Florida landed an astounding 27 players, including 22 players ranked four stars or better by Rivals.com. Of them, Florida pulled in the No. 1 player in the country along with top recruits from Texas, North Carolina and Georgia.

Leading the way for Meyer's class is wide receiver **Percy Harvin**, the top player in the country, and the No. 1 dual-threat quarterback in **Tim Tebow**. The 6-1, 188-pound Harvin is an extremely fast and elusive receiver that can make plays anywhere on the field. Over the last two seasons, Harvin recorded over 3,300 yards of offense and 58 touchdowns. Passing to him in the future will be Sunshine State quarterback Tim Tebow. The 6-3, 217-pounder accounted for over 13,000 yards of offense and 157 touchdowns in his high school career.

Other possible early contributors include the No. 3 offensive guard in the country **Carl Johnson**, the No. 2 outside linebacker **Brandon Spikes** and top athletes **Jamar Hornsby**, **Riley Cooper** and **Jarred Fayson**. Johnson enrolled early and is expected to make a push for playing time next season.



3 Florida State

QB-1, RB-1, WR-3, TE-1, OL-6, DL-6, LB-5, DB-5, ATH-2, ST-0

Bobby Bowden again finished with another solid recruiting class finishing with an impressive 31 recruits. The Seminoles finished strong again landing 13 prospects in the final week before Signing Day. It goes without saying that it wasn't just quantity, but quality as well as the 'Noles hauled in 20 four- and five-star recruits as ranked by Rivals.com.

FSU made a strong push on both sides of the ball, but landed a lot more help on defense with star pickups like safety **Myron Rolle**, the No. 1 athlete in the country and the No. 2 weakside defensive end, **Brandon Warren**. New Jersey's Rolle is an outstanding prospect who makes plays all over the field. The 6-2, 214-pounder registered 112 tackles last season. The Seminoles beat out Warren's home state Volunteers for 6-2, 230-pounder. Warren recorded 83

tackles and 14 sacks last season.

Florida State made an impressive push on the offensive and defensive lines landing six prospects on both sides of the ball.

Leading the way on the offensive line is juco transfer **Shannon Boatman** and Tampa star **Daron Rose**. Besides

Warren on the defensive line the 'Noles landed strongman **Doug**

Thacker and juco tackle **Paul Griffin**. Other players that could make an impact next season include wide receiver **Damon McDaniel** and defensive back **Ochuko Jenije**.



4 Georgia

QB-1, RB-3, WR-1, TE-1, OL-8, DL-5, LB-4, DB-3, ATH-2, ST-0

After winning the SEC title last season, Georgia again finished strong in the recruiting race landing a solid 28-man recruiting class. Mark Richt and company continue to pull out some of the top players from across the country including 16 players ranked four stars or better by Rivals.com. Besides landing five of the top 10 prospects in the Peach State, the Bulldogs got top players from Maryland, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, California and New Jersey.

Richt may very well have found his replacement for D.J. Shockley in Dallas quarterback **Matthew Stafford**. The 6-3, 210-pounder is the top pro-style quarterback in the country after throwing for 3,991 yards, 38 touchdowns and just six interceptions as a senior. The other major prospect coming to Athens is the No. 1 player in Georgia and the top safety in America, **Reshad Jones**. The 6-1, 195-pounder could see time in the secondary next year for the Bulldogs after posting 82 tackles and two interceptions last season.

Georgia added impressive depth on the offensive line landing eight recruits including stars **Justin Anderson** and **Clifton Geathers**. Others that could play this fall include Maryland linebacker **Akeem Hebron**, elusive running back **Knowshon Moreno** and 6-5, 247-pound tight end **NaDerris Ward**.



5 Texas

QB-2, RB-2, WR-3, TE-2, OL-4, DL-4, LB-3, DB-3, ATH-1, ST-1

Mack Brown got off to a quick start for the 2006 recruiting class and finished with another top group. The Longhorns had 20 verbal commitments by the middle of the summer and finished up with 25 signees. As usual, Texas decided to stay mostly in-state and landed six of the top 10 recruits at home including the No. 1 player in Texas.

Leading the way are defensive end **Eddie Jones** and linebacker **Sergio Kindle**. The 6-3, 240-pound Jones finished the season rated as the No. 3 player in Texas and as the No. 3 weakside defensive end in the country after registering 127 tackles and eight sacks. Meanwhile, Texas fans are excited about Kindle who is the top inside linebacker prospect and No. 1 player in Texas. Over the past three seasons, he's amassed over 400 tackles.

Trying to find a replacement for Vince Young will be tough, but the coaches are hoping the No. 3 dual-threat quarterback in the country, **Jevan Snead**, might fit the bill. The 6-3, 205-pounder enrolled in January in hopes of competing for the starting job this fall. Other players that could be special for the Longhorns down the line are running back **Vondrell McGee**, offensive linemen **Buck Burnette** and **J'Marcus Webb** and defensive back **Chykie Brown**.



6 Penn State

QB-2, RB-3, WR-2, TE-1, OL-4, DL-9, LB-2, DB-1, ST-0

After showing impressive success on the field while making a run at the Big Ten title and posting an Orange Bowl victory, recruits jumped on the Nittany Lions bandwagon in droves in 2006. Joe Paterno finished with a remarkable recruiting class thanks in large part to the help of last year's No. 1 recruit Derrick Williams. Penn State landed 24 recruits including 15 four- and five-star prospects as ranked by Rivals.com. The Nittany Lions hauled in four of the top 10 players in the Keystone State as well as seven of the top 11 players in Maryland. They also went to Virginia and New York for other top talent.

Paterno focused on the defensive line as they picked up nine recruits, but the headliner of the class has to be five-star defensive back **A.J. Wallace**. The

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6-1, 195-pounder recorded 63 tackles and three interceptions as a senior. Previously it was unheard of for a freshman to play under Paterno, but now freshman are seeing the field and Wallace could be a huge force in the secondary this fall. It's the second straight year that Penn State signed the nation's top cornerback (Justin King in 2005).

With big numbers on the defensive line Penn State landed top talent that should make a huge impact soon including **Phillip Taylor**, **Jared Odrick** and **Maurice Evans**. The Nittany Lions found some help on the offensive side of the ball too with huge offensive linemen **Antonio Logan-Eli**, **Lou Eliades** and **J.B. Walton**. Wide receiver **Chris Bell** is expected to be an immediate impact player with his impressive 6-3, 205-pound frame and long striding speed. Penn State also stole a couple of big-time recruits away from other teams in the final weeks of recruiting in running back **Brent Carter** and star quarterback **Pat Devlin**, who had committed to Virginia and Miami respectively.



7

LSU

QB-0, RB-3, WR-3, TE-2, OL-5, DL-3, LB-4, DB-4, ATH-1, ST-0

With a year under his belt, Les Miles made a strong push, landing a 25-man recruiting class. His efforts are even more impressive considering Hurricane Katrina was a major setback for the program. The Tigers class includes top talent all over the field with 14 four- and five-star recruits. It is no surprise that nine of the top 10 players in the state of Louisiana decided to stay at home, but the Tigers also plucked talent from Mississippi, Florida, Texas and Virginia.

The top players in LSU's class are defensive tackle **Al Woods** and running back **Keiland Williams**. The 6-4, 329-pound Woods is the top player in Louisiana and No. 2 defensive tackle in the country. The longtime LSU commitment had an impressive senior season with 109 tackles. A Louisiana native, Williams heads back home to compete for a starting job this year after rushing for 1,325 yards and 12 touchdowns last season for Hargrave Military in Virginia.

The Tigers did a great job adding a handful of other players that could make an impact early in their careers. The No. 6 defensive tackle in the country, **Charles Deas** from Florida along with local stars **Jared Mitchell**, **Jai Eugene**, **Ricky Dixon** and **Charles Scott** all could be key recruits in upcoming years.



8

Notre Dame

QB-2, RB-3, WR-3, TE-2, OL-6, DL-2, LB-2, DB-5, ATH-1, ST-1

Charlie Weis took over and helped Notre Dame to an impressive season last year that saw them nearly knock off the No. 1 team in the country on their way to a Fiesta Bowl berth. The result of that season was a solid 27-man class featuring talent from coast to coast. The class featured 12 players ranked as four-star prospects or better from all over the country including Florida, Minnesota, California, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas.

The top two recruits heading to South Bend are the No. 3 running back in the country, **James Aldridge** and the No. 1 offensive tackle in the country, **Sam Young**. The 6-1, 215-pound Aldridge should have a chance to play early alongside 1,000-yard back **Darius Walker**. Last season he put up 2,100 yards and 22 touchdowns as a senior. The huge 6-8, 302-pound Young out of Florida checks in as the No. 11 player overall in the country.

The Irish made a strong push on the offensive line with other recruits including **Matt Carufel**, **Eric Olsen**, **Chris Stewart** and **Daniel Wenger**. Notre Dame got a huge boost in the defensive backfield too with standout corners **Darrin Walls** and **Raeshon McNeil**, with one or both expected to see time immediately this fall. Two other recruits fans are excited about are Chicago stud quarterback **Demetrius Jones** and 6-6, 239-pound tight end **Konrad Reuland**.



9

Oklahoma

QB-2, RB-2, WR-2, TE-2, OL-7, DL-5, LB-2, DB-3, ATH-3

The Sooners had a down season by their standards last year, finishing 7-4 including losses to UCLA and TCU, but toward the end of the season Bob Stoops turned things around winning six of his last seven. Despite the difficult year, recruits didn't turn their back on Oklahoma and the result is a very good 28-man recruiting class. The Sooners landed eight of the top 10 players in the state and plucked top talent out of Texas, Nevada, Louisiana and Kansas.

The jewel of Stoops 2006 class is the No. 1 defensive tackle in the country,

Gerald McCoy. The Oklahoma City prospect finished last season with 82 tackles and 20 sacks as he dominated the line.

Besides McCoy, another star player to watch is the No. 1 tight end in the country **Jermaine Gresham**. The 6-7, 230-pounder is versatile with the size and quickness to be a mismatch for any defender. He caught 67 passes for 1,170 yards and 24 touchdowns last season. Joining Gresham are other stars including the No. 2 all-purpose back in the country, **Demarco Murray**, the No. 3 wide receiver, **Adron Tennell**, and huge offensive tackle **Curtis Bailey**.



10

Auburn

QB-2, RB-1, WR-4, TE-1, OL-2, DL-9, LB-2, DB-1, ATH-2, ST-1

Auburn had another successful season on the field in 2005 finishing 9-3 including a bid to the Capital One Bowl. Tommy Tuberville followed the solid season with an impressive recruiting effort that saw the Tigers land 25 recruits, including nine on the defensive line. Auburn's class includes 15 four- and five-star recruits, as well as five of the top 10 players in the state of Alabama.

Defensive line was the name of the game and the top recruit is a defensive tackle. **Greg Smith** is a 6-1, 315-pound juco transfer that finally is making his way to Auburn. In 2004 as a senior in high school, he amassed an incredible 164 tackles with 37 for loss.

Though there were only a handful of recruits on the offensive side of the ball, the Tigers got quality including blue-chip receivers **Tim Hawthorne** and **Chris Slaughter**, rated at the No. 4 and 13 receivers in the country respectively. Auburn went to Maryland and signed the No. 6 running back in the nation, **Benjamin Tate**. The 5-10, 204-pounder ran for 2,214 yards last season and was impressive this spring as an early enrollee.



11

Alabama

QB-1, RB-2, WR-2, TE-1, OL-5, DL-1, LB-3, DB-6, ATH-2, ST-0

In 2006, Alabama had an impressive season that saw it win nine straight games and rise to No. 3 in the polls. The Tide turned after that, dropping two games before finishing with a bowl win. The successful season resulted in an impressive 23-man recruiting class that featured 12 players ranked four stars or better. The Tide pulled out four of the top 10 recruits in the state, including Alabama's top player in offensive lineman **Andre Smith**.

Smith, a Birmingham native, is the top-ranked offensive lineman in the country and the No. 2 player overall. The 6-4, 325-pound Smith should be an immovable force for Mike Shula's team starting from day one. Smith should provide much needed push for fellow five-star prep school star **Mike Ford**. The 6-2, 210-pounder was expected to compete for the starting job last year after rushing for 2,836 yards and 37 touchdowns as a senior. He took a year to prep, but is expected to make up for it this fall.

Alabama also helped themselves with other players on the offensive line and a solid group in the defensive backfield. Joining the No. 1 guard in the country are four-star linemen **Alex Stadler**, **Taylor Pharr** and **David Ross**. In the secondary, the Crimson Tide picked up major help with four-star prospects **Marquis Johnson**, **Justin Woodall** and **Marcus Udell**. All of them are expected to be important factors early in their college careers.



12

Ohio State

QB-1, RB-3, WR-1, TE-2, OL-2, DL-3, LB-5, DB-3, ATH-0, ST-0

Ohio State completed an impressive 10-2 season that saw it head to the BCS and win the Fiesta Bowl. Jim Tressel also had success on the recruiting trail as he landed a 20-man recruiting class featuring seven of the top ten players in the Buckeye State, including the nation's No. 3 player overall.

Ohio State landed the top two prospects in the state in running back **Chris Wells** and defensive end **Robert Rose**. The 6-1, 226-pound Wells out of Akron is the top running back in the country after compiling 2,134 yards and 28 touchdowns last season. The 6-4, 255-pound Rose was one of the fastest rising prospects in the country and is rated as the No. 1 strongside defensive end. Both players are expected to make a major impact as freshmen.

The Buckeyes got major help at linebacker by picking up four four-star prospects in **Thaddeus Gibson**, **Mark Johnson**, **Ross Homan** and **Larry Grant**. All of them could be major contributors in the next couple of years. Wide receiver **Raymond Small** may be slightly undersized, but he is an elusive and

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speedy prospect that may remind some Buckeye fans of Ted Ginn, Jr. Small hails from Ginn's high school, Glenville, in Cleveland.



13

Michigan

QB-1, RB-3, WR-1, TE-0, OL-3, DL-5, LB-3, DB-2, ATH-0, ST-1

Michigan usually has little trouble on the recruiting trail and Lloyd Carr pulled in another talented class in 2006. The Wolverines signed 19 players, 11 of whom were rated four stars or better by Rivals.com. Michigan pulled in the top player in the state as well as top talent from across the country from Washington, Ohio, Georgia, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia and South Carolina.

The stars of the class are linebacker **Brandon Graham** and offensive tackle **Stephen Schilling** who ranked No. 15 and No. 26 nationally respectively. The 6-2, 250-pound Graham is a big and quick linebacker off the edge who had 200 tackles and 30 sacks over the past two seasons. On the offensive side of the ball, Carr got major help with Schilling out of the state of Washington. The 6-5, 290-pounder is a quick lineman who could be a future All American.

The Wolverines added defensive tackle and running back depth with two four-star prospects at each position. **Jason Kates** and **Adam Patterson** are intimidating forces along the line, while **Carlos Brown** and **Brandon Minor** should provide tremendous speed and power in the backfield.



14

Miami

QB-1, RB-3, WR-2, TE-2, OL-3, DL-5, LB-1, DB-3, ATH-0, ST-1

Miami is always a player on the recruiting front and it was another successful season for Larry Coker. An embarrassing loss to LSU, the firing of four coaches and the late loss of big-time quarterback commitment Pat Devlin still couldn't keep Miami out of the nation's top 15. Miami came out with a 22-man recruiting class that featured 10 four-star prospects.

Coker and his staff got help at a few key positions including the defensive backfield, running back and tight end with two four-star prospects in each area. Cornerback **Ryan Hill** and safety **Tervaris Johnson** should see the field early in their careers after outstanding seasons where each recorded three interceptions. The running game should be improved with two Florida stars, **Javaris James** and **Kylan Robinson**. Success at tight end should continue for years with 6-4, 227-pound **Dedrick Epps** and 6-6, 248-pounder **Jason Fox**.

The Hurricanes got some help along the defensive line with five recruits including blue-chippers **Richard Gordon** and **Josh Holmes**. The 6-4, 265-pound Gordon will provide immediate help on the line. Holmes still needs to bulk up some, but has the skills after registering 43 tackles and 11 sacks as a senior.



15

Clemson

QB-1, RB-2, WR-3, TE-1, OL-2, DL-2, LB-2, DB-4, ATH-1, ST-1

Tommy Bowden continues to find a lot of success on the recruiting trail and this season he reached new heights. The Tigers coach has the closing instincts of his dad as he finished strong, landing the nation's No. 1 all-purpose running back on Signing Day. Clemson amassed a 20-man recruiting class that included the top player from both South Carolina and Florida. They also went to North Carolina, Virginia and Illinois for other top players.

The cream of the crop is the No. 8 player in the country and top player in Florida, **C.J. Spiller**. The 5-10, 190-pounder will find time in the backfield next season after recording over 3,700 yards of offense and 57 touchdowns the past two seasons. Clemson picked up an impact player on defense locally in defensive end **Ricky Sapp**. The 6-4, 225-pounder has remarkable speed off the edge and is rated the nation's No. 1 weakside defensive end.

Bowden made a concerted effort to land defensive backs as he got four four-star prospects including **DeAndre McDaniel**, **Crezdon Butler**, **Darius Gaither** and **Byron Maxwell**.



16

Ole Miss

QB-2, RB-3, WR-3, TE-2, OL-5, DL-5, LB-2, DB-1, ATH-6, ST-1

Despite a disappointing 3-8 season last year, Ole Miss still found a lot of success during the 2006 recruiting season. Ed Orgeron pulled in a 30-man class

that included nine players ranked four stars or better by Rivals.com. The Rebels had a lot of success locally, landing the top player in Mississippi, but also went to Tennessee, California and Georgia with success.

Orgeron and his staff signed two five-star prospects. Versatile quarterback **Brent Schaeffer**, formally of the Tennessee Volunteers, is one of the top juco players in the country. After accounting for over 3,800 yards of offense and 50 touchdowns last season, he is expected to compete for the starting job this fall. Meanwhile, defensive tackle **Jerrell Powe** is expected to make his way back home from prep school in Chatham, Va. The 6-3, 360-pounder will be a force to be reckoned with on the Rebel defense for years to come.

In addition to Powe, Ole Miss made a strong push on the defensive line by signing **Marcus Tillman** and **Kentrell Lockett**. The Rebels also recruited a lot of versatile athletes, six to be exact, led by safety **Allen Walker** from Olive Branch.



17

UCLA

QB-0, RB-2, WR-2, TE-0, OL-8, DL-5, LB-1, DB-1, ATH-2, ST-1

UCLA went 10-2 last year including an undefeated start through their first eight games. The successful season resulted in many players flocking to the Bruins as Karl Dorrell is starting to build a solid foundation. His 2006 class is 22 strong with seven four-star prospects as rated by Rivals.com, including the top player in Hawaii.

Dorrell and his staff are elated about landing depth along the offensive line with eight recruits including four four-star prospects. Hawaii's top player, **Micah Kia**, along with **Jake Dean**, **Andy Keane** and **Sean Sheller** should provide much needed help in the years to come to keep the Bruins high-powered offense rolling.

If anything was lacking last year it was on defense as UCLA found themselves in many shootouts, but they should have a much better pass rush in the next few years. They signed the No. 2 player in Nevada, defensive tackle **Jerzy Siewierski**, and one of California's better defensive ends in **Jeff Miller**.



18

Arizona

QB-1, RB-2, WR-2, TE-1, OL-4, DL-8, LB-0, DB-5, ATH-2, ST-0

Mike Stoops is finding it difficult, as expected, to turn around the Arizona program as he struggled to a 3-8 season last year. He can hang his hat on a couple big wins though including a major triumph over UCLA late in the season as well as success on the recruiting trail. The Wildcats landed 25 recruits including the nation's top juco player.

The gem of Stoops' class is five-star defensive tackle **Louis Holmes**, the top player out of junior college. The 6-5, 280-pounder has remarkable speed for a big man and is going to be an impact player for the Wildcats next season as an early enrollee. Holmes recorded an astounding 102 tackles and 11 sacks in his final year of high school.

Alongside Holmes, Arizona picked up seven other defensive linemen, including talented four-star prospects **A.J. Simmons** and **Gabe Long**. The Wildcats received help in the secondary as well to slow down those other high-powered Pac-10 offenses with five recruits, including four-star corner **Mike Turner**.



19

California

QB-1, RB-3, WR-2, TE-0, OL-6, DL-3, LB-1, DB-3, ATH-0, ST-1

California is familiar to recruiting success under Jeff Tedford and 2006 was no different. The Golden Bears landed 20 recruits including nine four-star prospects as ranked by Rivals.com. Besides landing plenty of talent in-state, Tedford and his staff went to Colorado, Oregon and Washington for other top players.

The Golden Bears made an effort to bulk up the offensive line as they signed six recruits, three of which are four-star prospects. **Chris Guarnero**, **Mike Costanzo** and **Mike Gibson** should provide some time for future quarterbacks in Tedford's system. Speaking of quarterbacks, Tedford landed a good one in Oregon gunslinger **Kevin Riley**. The 6-1, 192-pounder fits the mold

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for Cal quarterbacks as he threw for over 5,000 yards and 65 touchdowns in the past two years at Beaverton High School.

California got big-time defensive help as well in the form of defensive linemen **Derrick Hill** and **Rulon Davis**. The 6-1, 278-pound Hill is a huge, immovable force on the inside and should contribute early in his college career. Meanwhile, Davis is a juco recruit and an Iraq War Veteran. He is a huge lineman at 6-6, 275-pounds and is expected to make an immediate impact this fall.



20

Nebraska

QB-0, RB-1, WR-3, TE-1, OL-6, DL-5, LB-1, DB-2, ATH-3, ST-0

Nebraska had tremendous success in Bill Callahan's first year on the recruiting trail and he followed it up with another solid effort. Callahan signed a 22-man recruiting class which included the top player in Nebraska as well as two of the top junior college prospects in 2006.

Callahan and his staff are elated about their prize recruit, five-star juco cornerback **Andre Jones**. The 6-0, 195-pounder formerly of the Kentucky Wildcats is a speedster who was rated as the No. 4 junior college player in the country after reeling in five interceptions last season.

The Cornhuskers landed some very talented offensive players as well including huge linemen **D.J. Jones** and **Carl Nicks**. Over the years Nebraska has never had trouble signing top running backs and they picked up four players who could play that role. Leading the way is 6-0, 220-pound running back **Kenny Wilson**, another juco player. Wilson rushed for 1,229 yards and 14 touchdowns last year. Pushing him for a shot at early playing time is athlete **Ricky Thenarse** from California who racked up over 1,500 yards of offense and 15 touchdowns for his high school last year.



23

Tennessee

QB-1, RB-1, WR-2, TE-2, OL-4, DL-5, LB-3, DB-1, ATH-1, ST-2

The Volunteers usually land some of the best classes and are always near the top 10 in the country. Last season however saw a little bit of a drop off due in part to their struggles on the field and their 5-6 record. Tennessee still finished with a solid class that featured the No. 2 junior college player in the country and the No. 2 player in their home state. Phillip Fulmer traveled across the country to pull some top talent out of Illinois, Virginia, Florida, Mississippi and Texas.

The prize of the Tennessee class has to be juco defensive end **Walter Fisher** who ranks as the No. 2 junior college player nationally. The 6-2, 265-pounder should provide an immediate force off the edge in his three remaining years of eligibility in Knoxville.

Fulmer has to be excited about the depth he landed along the offensive line with four recruits including three four-star prospects in **Jacques McClendon**, **Ramone Johnson** and **Darius Myers**. All three have the potential to take the field early in their careers. One other star in the making is versatile athlete and prospective wide receiver **Brent Vinson** out of Hampton, Va. The 6-2, 180-pounder is one of the fastest players in the country.



21

Pittsburgh

QB-2, RB-1, WR-0, TE-1, OL-3, DL-8, LB-3, DB-5, ATH-3, ST-0

It was a difficult return home for Dave Wannstedt who saw his Panthers struggle to 5-6 record last season. It wasn't a complete loss for the former NFL coach as he had tremendous success in his first recruiting year. Pittsburgh signed a 26-player recruiting class that included seven four-star prospects as ranked by Rivals.com.

Pittsburgh got much needed help on offense with stars like athlete **Dorin Dickerson**, tight end **Nate Byham** and running back **Kevin Collier**. Dickerson checked in as the No. 8 athlete in the country last season after accounting for over 1,850 yards and 28 touchdowns, but he's expected to play wide receiver at Pitt. The 6-3, 215-pound Byham is a quick tight end who should help open up the offense. He recorded 45 receptions for 883 yards and nine touchdowns last year. Important to all of Wannstedt's teams has been the running game and the staff has found their man in the No. 15 rusher in the country, elusive running back **Kevin Collier**.

The Panthers got some top help on defense too with defensive tackle **John Malecki** and defensive back **Aaron Berry**. The 6-3, 275-pound Malecki is a quick defensive tackle prospect that should find some opportunity to play early in the Pittsburgh defense. He posted over 100 tackles and 14 sacks last season. Berry is a versatile player who could play both sides of the ball once he gets to Pittsburgh.



22

Oklahoma State

QB-1, RB-2, WR-3, TE-0, OL-5, DL-5, LB-5, DB-5, ATH-3, ST-0

Mike Gundy had a tough year last season as his Cowboys finished with a 4-7 season. Despite that, Oklahoma State fans rejoiced over a couple of victories including a big win over highly-ranked Texas Tech. They can also be happy about a successful recruiting campaign. The Cowboys ended up signing 29 prospects, a group that featured six four-star prospects as ranked by Rivals.com.

The Cowboys coaches made a strong push to solidify their defense this year by adding top talent at key positions including defensive end and defensive back. Oklahoma State added a strong and a weakside defensive end in **Derek Burton** and **Ugo Chinasa** respectively. Burton is a big, speedy end that was rated as the No. 3 player in the state last season. The 6-5, 220-pound Chinasa has plenty of room to grow and is already an intimidating force on the line. The



24

South Carolina

QB-1, RB-1, WR-2, TE-0, OL-8, DL-4, LB-4, DB-3, ATH-1, ST-0

Steve Spurrier's return to the college ranks at South Carolina resulted in immediate success for the Gamecocks on the gridiron and off the field in recruiting. South Carolina had a good haul in 2006 with 24 recruits including six four-star prospects as ranked by Rivals.com. Spurrier and his staff signed top talent out of various regions of the country including Florida, Alabama, New Jersey, Georgia and North Carolina.

The Gamecocks improved themselves particularly along the offensive line signing eight recruits, four of which are four-star prospects. **Garrett Anderson**, **Hutch Eckerson**, **Kevin Young** and **Clarence Bailey** are all very athletic big men that should help provide the push for Spurrier's return to the fun and gun offense.

Of course a successful quarterback is also needed and South Carolina reeled in the No. 8 pro-style quarterback in the country, **Chris Smelley**. The 6-3, 213-pounder threw for over 4,100 yards and 59 touchdowns as a senior. One other player of note along the defensive line is huge 6-5, 318-pounder **Kenrick Ellis**. The No. 12 defensive tackle in the country is a beast on the line.



25

Texas A&M

QB-0, RB-4, WR-4, TE-0, OL-1, DL-2, LB-4, DB-4, ATH-2, ST-0

Dennis Franchione had a tough year last season watching the Aggies fall to 5-6 including four straight losses. Despite that, recruits continue to follow him in droves. This season Franchione signed 22 recruits including the No. 4 running back in the country.

The star of the Aggies class is 6-0, 205-pound running back **Michael Goodson**. The four-star prospect amassed over 2,200 yards and 26 touchdowns the last two seasons. He is a speedster who should find some early playing time this fall and has unlimited potential.

There is top defensive talent coming in as well including two four-star defensive backs in **Jordan Pugh** and **Jarius Neal**. The cornerback and safety prospects should provide an impact early, particularly junior college recruit Neal. Halton linebacker **Anthony Lewis** is expected to wreak havoc on Big 12 defenses. The 6-2, 220-pounder rates in as the No. 8 outside linebacker in the country.

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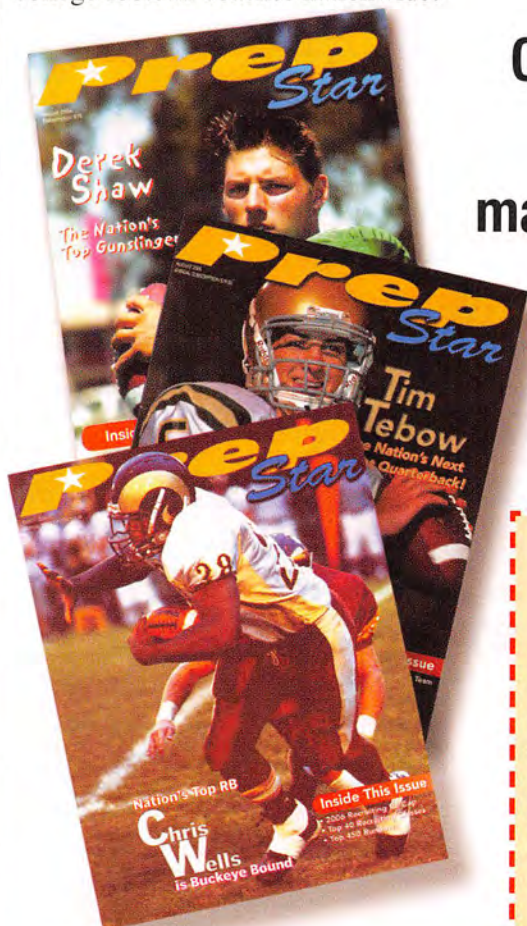
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NATIONAL RECRUITING

100 FOR 2006

INCOMING FRESHMEN

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

RATING	HT., WT.	HOMETOWN/SCHOOL	COLLEGE
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QUARTERBACKS

6. Matthew Stafford	6-3, 210	Dallas Highland Park	Georgia
10. Mitch Mustain	6-3, 208	Springdale (Ark.)	Arkansas
22. Tim Tebow	6-3, 217	Ponte Vedra Beach (Fla.) Nease	Florida
54. Demetrius Jones	6-3, 192	Chicago Morgan Park	Notre Dame
61. Jevan Snead	6-3, 205	Stephenville (Texas)	Texas
68. Jake Locker	6-3, 210	Ferndale (Wash.)	Washington
80. Isiah Williams	6-2, 205	Chicago Vocational	Illinois
92. Josh Freeman	6-6, 231	Grandview (Mo.)	Kansas State
94. Jeremy Ricker	6-2, 205	Harrisburg (Penn.) Bishop McDevitt	Maryland

RUNNING BACKS

3. Chris Wells	6-1, 226	Akron (Ohio) Garfield	Ohio State
8. C.J. Spiller	5-10, 190	Lake Butler (Fla.) Lake Mary	Clemson
18. Stafon Johnson	5-11, 200	Los Angeles Dorsey	Southern Cal
27. James Aldridge	6-1, 215	Crown Point (Ind.) Merrillville	Notre Dame
32. Michael Goodson	6-0, 205	Klein (Texas) Collins	Texas A&M
35. Demarco Murray	6-0, 183	Las Vegas Bishop Gorman	Oklahoma
39. Carlos Brown	6-0, 205	Franklin (Ga.) Heard County	Michigan
41. Benjamin Tate	5-10, 204	Newark (Md.) Snow Hill	Auburn
43. LeSean McCoy	5-11, 204	Harrisburg (Penn.) Bishop McDevitt	Miami
50. Charles Scott	6-0, 215	Jonesboro (La.) Jonesboro-Hodge	LSU
57. Vondrell McGee	5-10, 190	Longview (Texas)	Texas
70. Emmanuel Moody	6-1, 195	Coppell (Texas)	Southern Cal
73. Knowshon Moreno	5-11, 205	Middletown (N.J.) Middletown South	Georgia
87. Terry Grant	5-10, 180	Lumberton (Miss.)	Alabama
96. Kylan Robinson	6-1, 215	Tampa (Fla.) Chamberlain	Miami

WIDE RECEIVERS

1. Percy Harvin	6-1, 188	Virginia Beach (Va.) Landstown	Florida
7. Vidal Hazelton	6-3, 193	Chatham (Va.) Hargrave Military	Southern Cal
42. Adron Tennell	6-5, 200	Irving (Texas)	Oklahoma
49. Tim Hawthorne	6-2, 199	Homewood (Ala.)	Auburn
66. David Ausberry	6-4, 213	Lemoore (Calif.)	Southern Cal
69. Damon McDaniel	6-0, 192	Virginia Beach (Va.) Landstown	Florida State
88. Raymond Small	5-10, 173	Cleveland Glenville	Ohio State
93. Greg Mathews	6-2, 189	Orlando (Fla.) Edgewater	Michigan
95. Damian Williams	6-1, 180	Springdale (Ark.)	Arkansas
97. Jared Mitchell	5-11, 197	New Iberia (La.) Westgate	LSU

TIGHT ENDS

34. Jermaine Gresham	6-7, 230	Ardmore (Okla.)	Oklahoma
75. NaDerris Ward	6-5, 247	Oakland (Calif.) McClymonds	Georgia
81. Konrad Reuland	6-6, 239	Mission Viejo (Calif.)	Notre Dame

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

2. Andre Smith	6-4, 325	Birmingham (Ala.) Huffman	Alabama
11. Sam Young	6-8, 302	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas	Notre Dame
26. Stephen Schilling	6-5, 290	Bellevue (Wash.)	Michigan
28. Carl Johnson	6-6, 348	Durham (N.C.) Southern	Florida

30. Daron Rose	6-5, 310	Tampa (Fla.) Jefferson	Florida State
55. Connor Smith	6-6, 245	Cincinnati Morgan Park	Ohio State
58. Antonio Logan-El	6-4, 307	Forestville (Md.)	Penn State
63. J'Marcus Webb	6-8, 285	Mesquite (Texas) North Mesquite	Texas
64. Justin Boren	6-3, 319	Pickerington (Ohio) North	Michigan
72. J.B. Walton	6-3, 275	Indian Head (Md.) Lackey	Penn State
100. Justin Anderson	6-5, 320	Ocala (Ga.) Irwin County	Georgia

DEFENSIVE ENDS

17. Robert Rose	6-4, 255	Cleveland Glenville	Ohio State
21. Ricky Sapp	6-4, 225	Bamberg (S.C.) Bamberg-Ehrhardt	Clemson
24. Brandon Warren	6-2, 230	Alcoa (Tenn.)	Florida State
25. Eddie Jones	6-3, 240	Kilgore (Texas)	Texas
36. Micah Johnson	6-2, 267	Fort Campbell (Ky.)	Kentucky
46. Maurice Evans	6-3, 245	Middle Village (N.Y.) Christ the King	Penn State
52. Deantwan Whitehead	6-6, 245	Birmingham (Ala.) West End	Louisville
62. Derek Simmons	6-4, 268	Fairfield (Calif.) Armijo	Southern Cal
86. Lamarr Houston	6-2, 257	Colorado Springs (Colo.) Doherty	Texas

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

4. Gerald McCoy	6-4, 305	Oklahoma City Southeast	Oklahoma
20. Al Woods	6-4, 329	Elton (La.)	LSU
31. Jared Odrick	6-5, 303	Lebanon (Penn.)	Penn State
44. Butch Lewis	6-6, 280	Aurora (Colo.) Regis Jesuit	Southern Cal
48. Derrick Hill	6-1, 278	Oakland (Calif.) McClymonds	California
79. Charles Deas	6-4, 315	Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) Dillard	LSU
91. Adam Patterson	6-2, 256	Columbia (S.C.) Richardson Northeast	Michigan

LINEBACKERS

5. Sergio Kindle	6-4, 225	Dallas Woodrow Wilson	Texas
9. Allen Bradford	5-11, 219	Colton (Calif.)	Southern Cal
13. Brandon Spikes	6-4, 235	Shelby (N.C.) Crest Senior	Florida
15. Brandon Graham	6-2, 250	Detroit Crockett	Michigan
37. Marcus Ball	6-0, 204	Stone Mountain (Ga.) Stephenson	Florida State
40. Joshua Tatum	6-0, 219	Oakland (Calif.) McClymonds	Southern Cal
65. Akeem Hebron	6-1, 195	Gaithersburg (Md.) Good Counsel	Georgia
67. Michael Morgan	6-2, 200	Dallas Skyline	Southern Cal
76. Marcus Sims	6-0, 211	Tallahassee (Fla.) North Christian	Florida State
78. Jeremiha Hunter	6-2, 220	Harrisburg (Penn.)	Iowa
82. Derrick Odom	6-2, 196	Jackson (Miss.) Callaway	LSU
84. Anthony Lewis	6-2, 220	Haltom City (Texas) Haltom	Texas A&M
89. Jared Norton	6-3, 232	Rowlett (Texas)	Texas

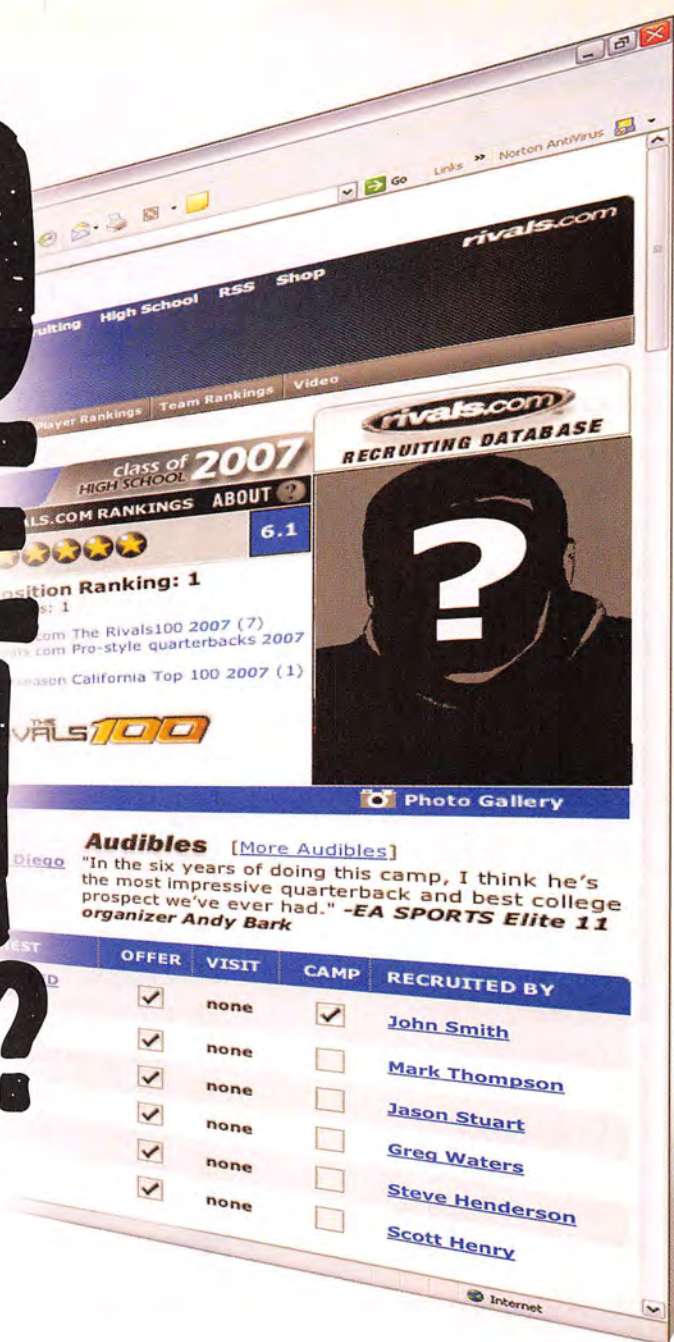
DEFENSIVE BACKS

14. Reshad Jones	6-1, 195	Atlanta Booker T. Washington	Georgia
18. A.J. Wallace	6-1, 195	Pomfret (Md.) McDonough	Penn State
38. Shareece Wright	5-11, 180	Colton (Calif.)	Southern Cal
45. Jonas Mouton	6-2, 212	Venice (Calif.)	Michigan
51. Darrin Walls	6-0, 172	Pittsburgh Woodland Hills	Notre Dame
53. Chykie Brown	6-1, 175	Houston North Shore	Texas
56. Tervaris Johnson	6-2, 211	Miami Monsignor Pace	Miami
59. Ryan Hill	5-11, 186	Tallahassee (Fla.) Rickards	Miami
71. Devin Ross	5-11, 180	Rancho Cucamonga (Calif.)	Arizona
74. Raeshon McNeil	6-0, 175	Mocksville (N.C.) Davie County	Notre Dame
83. Darian Hagan	5-11, 180	Los Angeles Crenshaw	California
90. DeAndre McDaniel	6-0, 185	Tallahassee (Fla.) Godby	Clemson

ATHLETES

12. Myron Rolle	6-2, 214	Princeton (N.J.) The Hun School	Florida State
16. Taylor Mays	6-3, 218	Seattle O'Dea	Southern Cal
23. C.J. Gable	5-11, 180	Sylmar (Calif.)	Southern Cal
29. Antwine Perez	6-1, 199	Camden (N.J.) Woodrow Wilson	Southern Cal
33. Jamere Holland	6-1, 175	Woodland Hills (Calif.) Taft	Southern Cal
47. Jarred Fayson	6-0, 194	Tampa (Fla.) Hillsborough	Florida
60. Allen Walker	6-1, 200	Olive Branch (Miss.)	Ole Miss
77. Deon Beasley	5-10, 160	Orange (Texas) West Orange Stark	Texas
85. Dorin Dickerson	6-2, 202	Imperial (Penn.) West Allegheny	Pittsburgh
98. Earl Alexander	6-4, 200	Phenix City (Ala.) Central	Alabama
99. Riley Cooper	6-4, 208	Clearwater (Fla.) Catholic	Florida

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TOP 10 SCHOOLS BY POSITION

QUARTERBACK

1. Notre Dame
2. Georgia
3. Florida
4. Ole Miss
5. Arkansas
6. Texas
7. Penn State
8. Illinois
9. Maryland
9. Kansas State

RUNNING BACK

1. Southern Cal
2. Miami
3. LSU
4. Texas A&M
5. Notre Dame
6. Ohio State
7. Michigan
8. Washington State
9. Alabama
10. Clemson

WIDE RECEIVER

1. Southern Cal
2. Auburn
3. Florida
4. LSU
5. Arkansas
6. Florida State
7. Texas
8. Oklahoma
9. Nebraska
10. Illinois

TIGHT END

1. Notre Dame
2. Oklahoma
3. Miami
4. North Carolina
5. Georgia
6. LSU
6. Ohio State
6. Southern Cal
9. Boston College
9. Florida State

OFFENSIVE LINE

1. Notre Dame
2. Alabama
3. UCLA
4. Georgia
5. Oklahoma
6. Florida State
7. South Carolina
8. Florida
9. California
10. Michigan

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

1. Penn State
2. Auburn
3. LSU
4. Florida
5. Southern Cal
6. Utah
7. Oklahoma
8. Louisville
9. Pittsburgh
10. Michigan

DEFENSIVE END

1. Florida State
2. Texas
3. Arizona
4. Virginia Tech
4. Penn State
6. Clemson
7. Kentucky
8. Georgia
9. Oklahoma State
10. Ohio State

LINEBACKER

1. Florida State
2. Southern Cal
3. Ohio State
4. Texas
5. Florida
6. Georgia
7. Oregon State
8. Michigan
9. Arizona State
10. LSU

DEFENSIVE BACK

1. Alabama
2. Georgia
3. Florida State
4. Notre Dame
5. Clemson
6. Southern Cal
7. Miami
7. Arizona
9. LSU
10. Texas Tech
10. West Virginia

ATHLETE

1. Southern Cal
2. Florida
3. Florida State

4. Pittsburgh
5. Ole Miss

6. Maryland
6. North Carolina

8. Mississippi State
9. Nebraska
10. Georgia

BIG 12 RECRUITING

By John Talman
Rivals.com



Texas

It wasn't surprising that the Longhorns hauled in one of the top classes in the country, but collecting most of their commitments early was a storyline for most of the year. Coach Mack Brown assembled a string of early pickups that included the state's top two players in linebacker **Sergio Kindle** (6-4, 225) and **Eddie Jones** (6-3, 240), on the way to finishing with the nation's No. 5 class. UT also managed to sign eight players from the Rivals100. Five players were among the top five nationally at their position.

Texas, needing quarterbacks, landed **Jevan Snead** (6-3, 205) who comes in to compete early for spring ball. The Horns also landed dual-threat signal caller **Sherrod Harris** to make for a solid group of incoming possibilities. UT also picked up top receiver prospects **Phillip Payne** (6-2, 201) and **Montre Webber** (6-3, 191) finishing off a well-rounded offensive unit.

Defensively, UT also put together a solid group of incoming freshman. Out-of-state defensive end **Lamar Houston** (6-2, 257) from Colorado Springs should compliment the five-star-rated Jones and defensive end **Brian Ellis** (6-5, 244). Linebacker Kindle should expect early time somewhere on the field while **Jared Norton** (6-3, 232) should also compete well come fall.

Headliner: With the need for quarterbacks after the departure of Vince Young, the pickup of Jevan Snead definitely will help the Horns build around another signal caller for the future.

Sleeper: Kicker **Hunter Lawrence** could be starting the season with the current depth situation. Lawrence set the single season record for field goals made.

Bottom line: After the smaller 2005 class, Texas wanted to put big emphasis on the group for 2006. The Horns not only signed a star-studded group, but a complete one that should help towards competing on the national level for years to come.



Oklahoma

With the assistance of a deep year in the Sooner state, Oklahoma grabbed late pledges on the way to another Top 10 finish. A huge offensive line class was a priority for coach Bob Stoops and the Sooners managed to pickup seven. OU was a force in Texas again signing 10 players from the state, including four of the Top 25.

Defensive tackle **Gerald McCoy** (6-4, 305) was one of the bigger prospects to come out of Oklahoma in the last several years. McCoy won't likely be told to wait on the sidelines. Fellow in-state player, tight end **Jermaine Gresham** (6-7, 230) is a dominating pass-catcher and he should also add depth to the position or possibly at receiver.

The state of Texas was a big focus for Stoops and company as usual. A late steal from Texas A&M in safety **Malcolm Williams** (5-10, 172) and the early pickup of wide receiver **Adron Tennell** should add depth to both positions. Defensive end **Jeremy Beal** emerged late on the scene but could find a home at either linebacker or along the line. Running back **Demarco Murray** could find a home either at receiver or as a ball carrier.

Headliner: Gerald McCoy, the nation's top defensive tackle, should be one of the better incoming freshmen to step on campus since Adrian Peterson's arrival. His knowledge of the game already should give him a jump on things.

Sleeper: Late in the process, all the talk was about in-state gem **Daniel Tabon** (6-3, 215). The Sooners could see big flashes early.

Bottom line: The Sooners may have had an up-and-down season in 2005, but the talk of this class is that it should fill some holes nicely for OU. The class has players that could see the field early but also add quality depth to positions in need of players.



Nebraska

Focusing heavily on instant playmakers, the Huskers went the junior college route for the 2006 class. Coach Bill Callahan needing to fuse certain players for the West Coast offense quickly definitely was evident with this group. Nebraska continued success in California with four high school players from the Golden State.

Needing defensive backs, NU went out and picked up the nation's No. 4 rated junior college prospect in cornerback **Andre Jones** (6-0, 195). Other juco pickups that are expected to make instant impacts include wide receiver **Maurice Purify** (6-4, 210), running back **Kenny Wilson**, and offensive lineman **Carl Nicks** (6-6, 320). Midyear transfer **Victory Haines** (6-7, 285) should add depth to the offensive line. In-state lineman **D.J. Jones** should also expect to get reps early.

The defensive line was another big need for the Huskers and they managed to put together a mix of high school and junior college players. Defensive tackle **Brandon Johnson** (6-3, 312) should see the field early. Don't forget about linebacker **Steve Allen** (6-2, 230) who has big-hitting mentality on defense and great closing speed.

Headliner: Though his ability at cornerback will be the focus, Fresno junior college defender Andre Jones could even see some time at safety or returning kicks. He had five interceptions in his final season at the juco level.

Sleeper: Wide receiver **Will Henry** came on late in the recruiting scene, but the 6-6, 195-pounder could do special things early. His height should get him an early look as NU attempts to add size to the wide receiver corps.

Bottom line: The 2006 class may not have been as highly touted as 2005, but it certainly filled several needs for NU going into the fall with mature players. Receiver and running back additions should help the offense click better.

TOP 20 INCOMING BIG 12 RECRUITS

Player	Ht./Wt.	Pos.	Hometown/School	College
1. Gerald McCoy	6-4/305	DT	Oklahoma City/Southeast	Oklahoma
2. Sergio Kindle	6-4/225	LB	Dallas/Wilson	Texas
3. Eddie Jones	6-3/240	DE	Kilgore, Texas/Kilgore	Texas
4. Andre Jones	6-0/195	DB	Fresno, Calif./Fresno City College	Nebraska
5. Michael Goodson	6-0/205	RB	Klein, Texas/Collins	Texas A&M
6. Jermaine Gresham	6-7/230	TE	Ardmore, Okla./Ardmore	Oklahoma
7. Demarco Murray	6-0/183	RB	Las Vegas/Bishop Gorman	Oklahoma
8. Adron Tennell	6-5/200	WR	Irving, Texas/Irving	Oklahoma
9. Chykie Brown	6-1/175	DB	Houston/North Shore	Texas
10. Vondrell McGee	5-10/190	RB	Longview, Texas/Longview	Texas
11. Jevan Snead	6-3/205	QB	Stephenville, Texas/Stephenville	Texas
12. Kenny Wilson	6-0/220	RB	El Dorado, Kan./Butler C.C.	Nebraska
13. J'Marcus Webb	6-8/285	OL	Mesquite, Texas/North Mesquite	Texas
14. Deon Beasley	5-10/160	ATH	Orange, Texas/West Orange Stark	Texas
15. James Johnson	5-11/200	RB	Brenham, Texas/Blinn College	Kansas State
16. Ofa Moheatau	6-3/340	OL	Visalia, Calif./Sequoias C.C.	Texas Tech
17. Anthony Lewis	6-2/220	LB	Haltom City, Texas/Haltom	Texas A&M
18. Lamar Houston	6-2/257	DE	Colorado Springs/Doherty	Texas
19. Jared Norton	6-3/232	LB	Rowlett, Texas/Rowlett	Texas
20. Josh Freeman	6-6/231	QB	Grandview, Mo./Grandview	Kansas State

BIG 12 RECRUITING



Oklahoma State

Even after a rough first season for new head coach Mike Gundy, the Cowboys staff put together one impressive group that was focused heavily on Texas. A pair of defensive backs from the Lone Star State, **Perrish Cox** (6-0, 175), who made a late switch from LSU, and **Terrance Anderson** (6-0, 173) were just two of the top pickups from the state.

Twenty of the total 29 signed for the 2006 class were from Texas. Cox, Anderson, and defensive end **Ugo Chinasa** (6-5, 220) were Top 20 players in the Top 100 for the state. Houston linebacker **Patrick Lavine** (6-2, 210) was one of six signees in the Rivals250.

Running back was satisfied nicely by junior college prospect **Dantrell Savage** (5-11, 195), but the majority of the class was filled by solid defenders. The Cowboys picked up five defensive line prospects, linebacker prospects, and defensive back prospects to add serious depth to the defense. Quarterback **Alex Cate** (6-0, 200) brings competition to spring ball.

Headliner: The Signing Day addition of **Perrish Cox** was definitely the cherry on top for the class even with a number of other defensive backs in the fold already. Cox was also a top receiver in high school.

Sleeper: Junior college wide receiver **Anthony Parks** (6-1, 185) was an early graduate and may come in and shake things up after the spring is through. He was a top receiver in one of the toughest juco conferences in the country.

Bottom line: Regardless of the season turnout for Gundy and his staff, the 2006 recruiting class filled a lot of needs and added up to a lot of depth. The success in the state of Texas should carry over into the next classes. The defense was definitely a priority and could see several new faces come fall.



Texas A&M

The 2006 class was a bit of a change from the Top 10-rated class in 2005, but there were still several needs met, especially at running back and on defense. Long-time Oklahoma State commit **Michael Goodson** (6-0, 205) was a top prospect that the Aggies never gave up on. Goodson was one of four running backs taken in the class but has the best chance of seeing the field early. With his big frame and solid speed, the expectations are high.

Other running backs such as Lufkin's **E.J. Shankle** (5-10, 180) and Dallas' **Cornell Tarrant** (5-11, 185) should also provide good competition at the stop. **Anthony Lewis** (6-2, 220) may add big competition to a new defensive scheme.

Defensive backs were also strengths of the group. Junior college safety **Jarius Neal** (6-3, 218) is expected to contribute immediately and cornerback **Jordan Pugh** (5-11, 190) was one of the state's best at corner and finished his senior season at running back with 340 yards in three games. Athlete **Jerrold Johnson** (6-6, 219) played quarterback as a senior and the Aggies will give him a look there.

Headliner: There was little doubt just how important the running back position and more importantly Michael Goodson was to the class. He has all the tools to do big things early and will get that chance.

Sleeper: After A&M signed his brother in 2005, wide receiver **Terrance McCoy** was not as well known as older sibling, but has a lot of natural ability. McCoy is a big, rangy receiver who has enough speed to be one of the Big 12's better pass-catchers in the next few seasons.

Bottom line: Texas A&M's 2006 class may not have been as glamorous as 2005, but it filled needs well and several incoming players could add their name to the starting list.



Texas Tech

Finding hidden gems is what Texas Tech does better than most, but coach Mike Leach definitely capitalized on several blue-chip prospects to add to his pass-heavy offense. Athlete **Michael Crabtree** was the second-highest rated athlete in the state of Texas. Playing mostly quarterback through his career, at receiver and on special teams is where the 6-1, 190-pounder can be special. In a passing offense heavily needing receivers, Crabtree could be an instant starter.

Tech signed one of the nation's biggest classes with a whopping 34 prospects on the list. This included Top 10 junior college prospect **Ofa Moheatu** (6-3, 340) who should contribute to the offensive line early. Athlete **Jamar Wall** (5-10, 180) is solid fit for the offense at running back and will get an early look there. Wall along with **Baron Batch** (5-10, 190) could earn a spot early considering the depth there.

Quarterback **Taylor Potts** (6-5, 210) was the only signal-caller taken, but his early commitment to Tech stayed true and gives the Red Raiders another future thrower to build around.

Headliner: Crabtree brings a variety of options to the team with his time spent at quarterback in high school but his potential at wide receiver. With unmatched quickness at the high school level, big things are expected from Crabtree.

Sleeper: In-state linebacker **Julius Howard** saw his stock rise late. His natural ability to close fast on the ball should make him an exciting player to watch in the future.

Bottom line: Texas Tech not only signed a large class, but one of real difference-makers. Several players on the list could compete early and at the minimum add more depth than almost any team in the Big 12. Leach's talent evaluation has always been strong and his classes are getting better each year.



Kansas

The Jayhawks targeted a variety of areas around the country to build a well-balanced 2006 class. Texas was another familiar area to recruit from and Kansas landed 10 from the Lone Star state. Defensive back **Anthony Webb** (6-1, 190) could fill a roll in the likeness of former two-way star Richard Gordon. Before the closure of his high school after his junior year, Webb capped off the season with an eye-popping 11 interceptions which led the Dallas Metroplex.

KU snagged two quarterbacks that fit the system well. Quarterback **Todd Reesing** (6-0, 180) isn't big on size, but put in the right scheme he can beat defenses with his arm or legs. Defensive back was a heavy need and in addition to Webb, the position was fulfilled well. Safety **Olaitan Oguntodu** (6-1, 200) and junior college corner **Mike McCoy** (5-11, 175) should do big things.

Oklahoma tight end **Bradley Dedeaux** (6-2, 238) has a huge upside and athlete **D'Marcus Lang** (6-3, 200) could play a number of different spots. Texas running back **Donte Bean** said after Signing Day that he is working towards an instant impact at Kansas.

Headliner: Webb's coaches described him as having "cat-like" skills and "unbelievable instincts." His intention is to compete right away and he'll more than likely get plenty of opportunity.

Sleeper: In-state signee **Jake Sharp** (5-10, 173) may still be a way from starting, but his speed and quickness should get a chance to show that off in Lawrence.

Bottom line: There is plenty of potential in this class. Though it's not as highly rated as others in the Big 12, it is yet another step as coach Mark Mangino continues to build up the Kansas program. The additions to the defense backfield, skill positions, and the offensive line should make for an exciting future.



Kansas State

When coach Bill Snyder stepped down, coach Ron Prince had to finish out the 2006 class strong. Though there were several gaps in the group when Snyder left, Prince certainly stepped up to the challenge. Quarterback **Josh Freeman** (6-6, 231) was a long-time Nebraska commit, but Prince began hard recruitment before his December graduation and pulled the switch. Freeman was the top rated player in the state of Missouri and a member of the EA SPORTS Elite 11. Arriving in spring, Freeman has a solid shot of contributing.

Top 10 rated junior college prospect, **James Johnson** (5-11, 200) has speed and then some. His big frame didn't slow him from running consistent 4.4-second 40-yard dashes at Blinn College in Texas. He should pick up in the tradition of great Wildcat running backs.

KSU also picked up the top in-state prospect in Pratt offensive tackle **Scott**

BIG 12 RECRUITING

Krehbiel (6-7, 280) who has a great frame and plenty of room to grow. Junior college players were also heavily targeted and considered a big-time success. Defensive backs like **Ray Cheatham** (6-0, 185) and **Courtney Edmond** (6-2, 220) have college-level experience that should help for early competition.

Headliner: Freeman's addition to the class was huge considering the coaching change. With a pro-style offense being put in place, his competition with the rest of the quarterbacks will play a huge roll in Prince's first season at KSU.

Sleeper: Florida's hidden gem **Josh Moore** (5-10, 166) recorded 10 interceptions as a junior in the highly competitive state. His athleticism should transfer well over to the Big 12.

Bottom line: Prince came in during the middle of the process, but still managed to produce a very solid group of prospects to build upon for the 2007 class. Juco players and a top flight quarterback should produce early results.



Missouri

After last year's class, the Tigers wanted to get back to recruiting well in their home state. They did a solid job in the 2006 class landing two of the state's top five players even with other schools recruiting the state. Wide receiver **Jeremy Maclin** (6-0, 187) was one of those top in-state targets that Missouri added late. He was rated among the nation's top 25 at his position.

The Tigers also hit multiple talent rich states such as Florida, California, and Texas to round out their class. Dual-threat quarterback **Dominic Grooms** (6-1, 172) should add multiple dimensions to the offense that is expected of Tiger quarterbacks. Grooms is joined by **J.P. Tillman** (6-2, 223) to keep that position deep. Wide receiver **Jared Perry** was groomed at a top Texas program at La Marque.

Junior college complimented high school talent in adding depth to the defensive back position. The Tigers took six total DB's in the 2006 class. Juco prospects **Castine Bridges** (6-2, 195) and **Cornelius Brown** (6-0, 200) add experience, while high school corners like **Kevin Rutland** should see bright futures. In-state offensive lineman **Tim Barnes** who was an all-state pick during both his sophomore and junior seasons.

Headliner: Maclin will bring speed to the wide receiver corps. Missouri hung tough after his de-commitment from Oklahoma and should come out on top in the long run with his athleticism.

Sleeper: Cornerback **Del Howard** accumulated a boat load of offers after his extremely successful junior season and became one of the most highly recruited defensive backs in Texas. Howard will work hard for a spot throughout the next few years.

Bottom line: Several spots that needed to depth were filled by a well-rounded group. Several wide receivers and defensive backs were important, as well as a young group of quarterbacks, who are on the way up.



Colorado

The Buffaloes were another team adding a new coach to the mix in the middle of the 2006 recruiting process. Coach Dan Hawkins brings his fast paced offense to the Big 12 but was on a shortened timeframe to finish the class. Given the circumstances, several needs were filled. Being the benefactor of a late defection from California athlete **Jimmy Smith** (6-1, 175) boosted the group.

Hawkins son **Dan Hawkins** (5-11, 176) is a quarterback who followed his dad to the new school. He could see some time where he can use both his arm and legs to make a play. Defensive end **Jason Brace** turned down Pac-10 offers to head to Colorado. Brace was a Top 10 player in the state of Washington and has plenty of upside for growth. In-state tight end **Steven Fendry** (6-6, 232) should also benefit from college nutrition program with such a solid body type. The Buffs also locked up three running backs, including California runner **Demetrius Sumler** (5-10, 220) who is a big body with speed on top of that. There will be plenty of options in the backfield.

Headliner: Jimmy Smith making a late switch to Colorado certainly was a nice way to finish. Smith should add instant depth to the defensive

backfield. A great frame on top of speed makes him a prototypical safety.

Sleeper: **Sherman Lang** is definitely the type of player that is deemed a sleeper with as many players that come out of the Sunshine state. His skills should develop well at the college level and he can be a great weapon in the offense.

Bottom line: It's hard to gauge just how good the recruiting class was given the shortened time table with coaching changes. However, Smith and prospects like Brace are definitely players to build around for the future.



Iowa State

Known for putting a priority in-state and then to other spots in the country, coach Dan McCarney added several pieces to the puzzle. Quarterback **Austen Arnaud** (6-3, 200) is the type of quarterback the Cyclones are used to seeing. The in-state prospect was a target from day one and with his frame, arm strength, and ability to move the pocket, sky is the limit for his future in the Big 12.

Texas was another stop for the Cyclone coaches and finding sleeper linebacker **Fred Garrin** (6-1, 215) was certainly well worth it. Garrin will come to the team with the ability to play either the weak side or at middle at linebacker. Oklahoma running back **Josh Johnson** (5-10, 204) was another under the radar prospect with loads of potential. Home state offensive tackle **Matt Hulbert** (6-7, 274) was a top prospect that received Big 12 interest.

Defense was definitely a priority for ISU as they took at least 13 players that are set to play that side of the ball. Athletes such as **Drenard Williams** (5-10, 170) could also be a top defender.

Headliner: Arnaud's ability to add another top name to the quarterback rotation was big for the Cyclones. He should follow the line of highly touted signal-callers at ISU.

Sleeper: **Rashawn Parker** (6-0, 235) is just a physical sight to see with chiseled frame and ability to get even bigger. His desire to be a better player should make him one to watch in the next few years. He could play numerous positions including linebacker.

Bottom line: Iowa State's class was not at the top of the heap in the Big 12, but there were certainly some stars to watch out for starting at quarterback and going all the way into the defense.



Baylor

Offensively, the Bears should see many more new faces come this fall as they head into another tough year in the Big 12 South. Several players are still not at their full potential. Benefiting from New Orleans move-in **Ernest Smith** (6-4, 200) who played his senior season for John Tyler High School in Texas, the wide receiver position is certainly well-stocked. Smith doesn't lose any speed, even though he's a big-bodied prospect with the ability to make the tough catch.

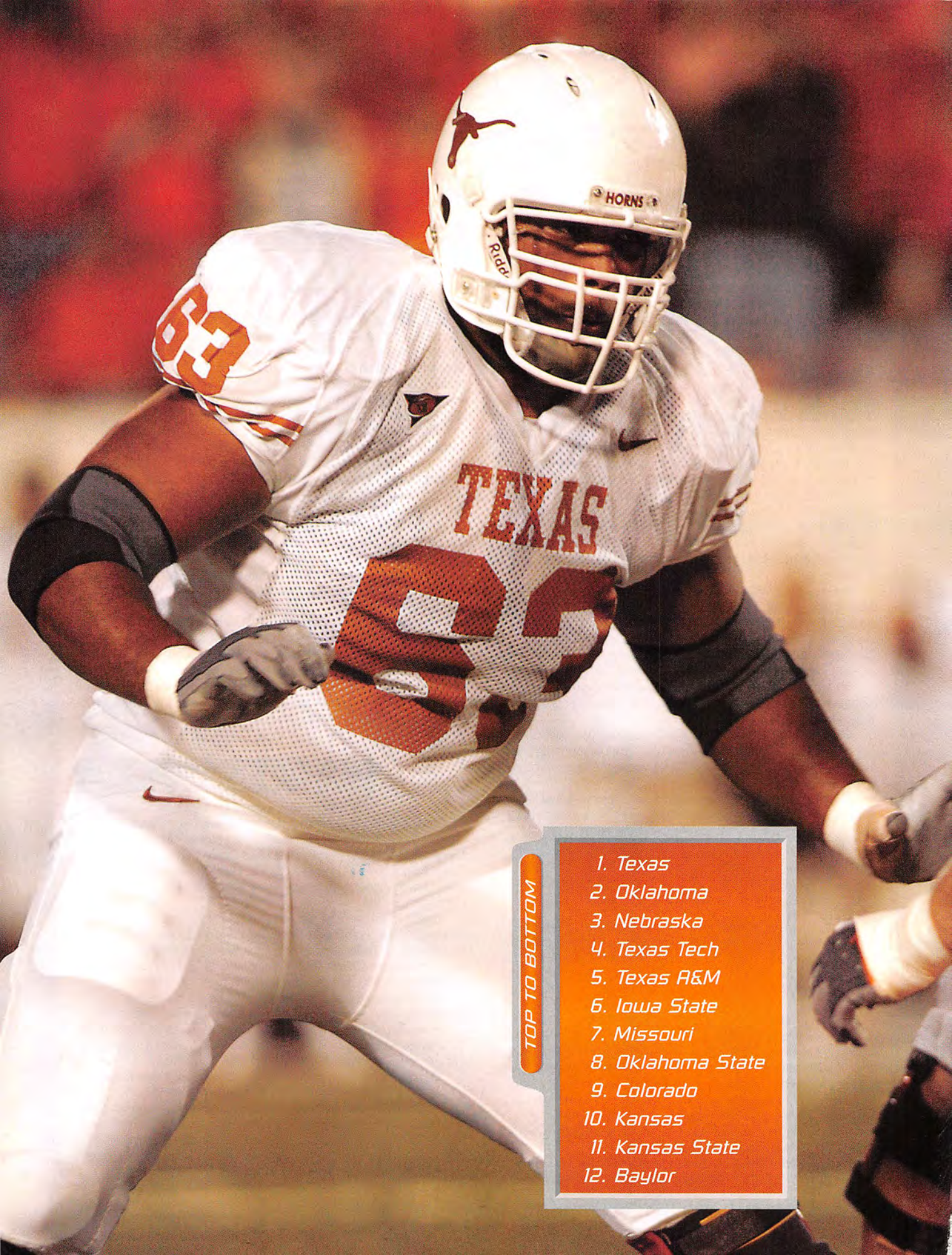
Smith was just one of five wide receivers taken in the class. Three quarterbacks were also a highlight to the group. Dual-threat quarterbacks **Anthony Norice** and **Brad Taylor** can move the pocket, where **Tyler Beatty** is a pro-style quarterback with the ability to stand back and make the big throw. Running back **Jay Finley** (5-11, 190) made big plays in a tough area for competition.

One of the more overlooked prospects on the list is defensive back **Tim Atchison**. He's not only armed with athleticism but uncanny field smarts.

Headliner: Smith's addition to the class certainly capped off one of the better groups of wide receivers in the conference. He truly is the total package with size, speed, quickness, and the ability to catch the tough catch.

Sleeper: Late in the process, colleges found out about the untapped potential of Bradenton, Florida offensive guard **Jeremy Michel** (6-5, 280). His growth in college should make for some big competition on the offensive line.

Bottom line: Baylor came up with the bottom class in the Big 12, but there is plenty for fans to be excited about with the offensive weapons coming in. Also, getting 2005 receiver David Gettis enrolled after academic issues arose last year is another big reason to watch out for this class.



TOP TO BOTTOM

1. Texas
2. Oklahoma
3. Nebraska
4. Texas Tech
5. Texas A&M
6. Iowa State
7. Missouri
8. Oklahoma State
9. Colorado
10. Kansas
11. Kansas State
12. Baylor

Younger than Young, Tougher than Tough

Texas is out to prove that its drive to its first national championship in 35 years wasn't a one-man show.

No Longhorn will dispute the role quarterback Vince Young played in last season's 13-0 run to the national title. Young's considerable talents were never more evident than in his engineering of the 41-38 Rose Bowl victory over Southern California.

Young and eight other starters from the national championship game won't be around this season, but their departure signals nothing to suggest a changing of attitude in Austin.

"Our guys did not come out of the national championship game complacent," Texas coach Mack Brown said. "We had our toughest spring we have had since I've been at Texas. The players got up at 6 a.m. every day

for offseason weight training. That's encouraging.

"Over the last 19 games we played, all people wanted to talk about was Vince Young and what he was doing. Our team played at a very high level throughout that streak, and we emphasize that it's a team game."

The topic of conversation leading up to this season certainly centers on who will replace Young, the Longhorns' starter the past 32 games and a consensus All-American last season.

The task will fall onto the shoulders of two quarterbacks that have never taken a snap in a college game — redshirt freshman Colt McCoy and true freshman Jevan Snead.

McCoy, a two-time all-stater in Texas, threw for 9,344 yards and 116 touchdowns in high school, while Snead, a *Parade* All-

American who entered Texas a semester early and participated in spring practice, passed for 6,571 yards and 67 scores in 25 games as a junior and senior.

"Right now, we plan on playing both our young quarterbacks because we don't have anyone with any experience," Brown said. "We know we might struggle some there early, but we have to get both of them snaps."

McCoy and Snead will be surrounded with enough talent that stamps Texas as the team to beat in the Big 12 Conference. The Longhorns' return three offensive linemen who should be high draft picks next spring, four backs that ran for 2,284 yards and 41 touchdowns, and all but one of the receivers who combined for 142 receptions.

Defensively, seven starters are back. Five of the seven received some type of all-conference

Big 12 Conference Picks

Big 12 South

1. Texas

GOOD NEWS

Defense could be better than last year; RBs and WRs are top flight.

BAD NEWS

UT doesn't have a Vince Young clone, just a couple of teenagers.

OUR CALL

If new QBs don't get in the way, Texas has the goods to be great.

2. Oklahoma

Bob Stoops (one who knows) says OU defense could be "really special."

Four new starters on offensive line; questionable depth at quarterback.

If Adrian Peterson is healthy and defense lives up to hype ... watch out, 'Horns.

3. Texas Tech

Receivers among the best in the land; defense continues to improve.

No fifth-year senior to step in at quarterback; untested running backs.

Offense will find a way, but Tech might go as far as its defense takes it.

4. Texas A&M

Sophomore QB Stephen McGee appears ready to take over offense.

Aggies' once-proud Wrecking Crew ranked 107th nationally last season.

A&M will get back in bowl picture this season ... but how big?

5. Oklahoma St.

Healthy QB Bobby Reid and improvement at skill positions add zip.

Defense gave up at least 34 points in all but one Big 12 game.

Cowboys improve in Mike Gundy's second season, but still no title challenger.

6. Baylor

Bears came within one victory last season of bowl eligibility.

Offense must master a new spread system; only four starters back on D.

Almost got to a bowl last year ... taking that final step won't be easy.

Big 12 North

1. Nebraska

QB Zac Taylor ready to flourish; linebackers among nation's finest.

Once-vaunted running game produced just 10 touchdowns last season.

Makeover of Husker program seems ready to produce something beautiful.

2. Iowa State

QB Bret Meyer, TB Stevie Hicks headline experienced offense.

Two top defenders — LB Matt Robertson, DE Jason Berryman — were booted.

Cyclones will have to score a lot of points to overcome leaky defense.

3. Missouri

Offense has solid front line, great TEs and emerging playmakers.

Secondary looks shaky; replacing QB Brad Smith is no easy task.

Tigers need something good to keep heat off Gary Pinkel (29-30, 5 years).

4. Colorado

Everybody seemed to want Dan Hawkins; the Buffs got him.

Finding a QB to run his spread offense is Hawkins' biggest challenge.

A season in transition should be worth the good stuff down the road.

5. Kansas

Last year was first winning season since 10 victories in 1995.

KU wasn't great on offense last season; now has redshirt frosh at QB.

Will need a few surprises from youngsters to match last season's 7-5 record.

6. Kansas State

Wildcats return more starters (19) than anyone in the Big 12.

Many of those starters were a part of back-to-back losing seasons.

Bill Snyder was great, but Ron Prince brings a breath of fresh air to Wildcats.

Lindy's 2006 ALL-BIG 12 Team

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	Bret Meyer	Jr.	Iowa State
RB	Adrian Peterson	Jr.	Oklahoma
RB	Jamaal Charles	So.	Texas
WR	Todd Blythe	Jr.	Iowa State
WR	Jarrett Hicks	Sr.	Texas Tech
TE	Martin Rucker	Jr.	Missouri
C	Lyle Sendlein	Sr.	Texas
OL	Justin Blalock	Sr.	Texas
OL	Mark Fenton	Sr.	Colorado
OL	Kasey Studdard	Sr.	Texas
OL	Corey Hilliard	Sr.	Oklahoma St.
AP	Terrence Nunn	Jr.	Nebraska
K	Mason Crosby	Sr.	Colorado

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Larry Birdine	Sr.	Oklahoma
DL	Adam Carriker	Sr.	Nebraska
DL	Tim Crowder	Sr.	Texas
DL	Brent Curvey	Sr.	Iowa State
LB	Rufus Alexander	Sr.	Oklahoma
LB	Thaddeus Washington	Sr.	Colorado
LB	Corey McKeon	Jr.	Nebraska
DB	Michael Griffin	Sr.	Texas
DB	David Overstreet	Sr.	Missouri
DB	C.J. Wilson	Sr.	Baylor
DB	J.J. Billingsley	Sr.	Colorado
P	Daniel Sepulveda	Sr.	Baylor

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	Zac Taylor	Sr.	Nebraska
RB	Courtney Lewis	Sr.	Texas A&M
RB	Mike Hamilton	So.	Oklahoma St.
WR	Joel Filani	Sr.	Texas Tech
WR	D'Juan Woods	Sr.	Oklahoma St.
TE	Matt Herian	Sr.	Nebraska
C	Kurt Mann	Sr.	Nebraska
OL	Aaron Brant	Sr.	Iowa State
OL	Joel Clinger	Sr.	Missouri
OL	Scott Stephenson	Sr.	Iowa State
OL	Manuel Ramirez	Sr.	Texas Tech
AP	DeAndre Jackson	Sr.	Iowa State
K	Jason Congdon	So.	Nebraska

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Calvin Thibodeaux	Sr.	Oklahoma
DL	Frank Okam	Jr.	Texas
DL	Brian Smith	Sr.	Missouri
DL	C.J. Ah You	Sr.	Oklahoma
LB	Robert Killebrew	Jr.	Texas
LB	Justin Warren	Sr.	Texas A&M
LB	Keyunta Dawson	Sr.	Texas Tech
DB	Melvin Bullitt	Sr.	Texas A&M
DB	Aqib Talib	So.	Kansas
DB	Marcus Watts	Jr.	Kansas State
DB	Reggie Smith	So.	Oklahoma
P	Justin Brantly	So.	Texas A&M

mention, while linebacker Rashad Bobino was a first-team Freshman All-American.

If Texas stumbles, arch-rival Oklahoma will be looming. The Sooners' offense has 11 players with starting experience, including All-America running back Adrian Peterson. Yet, it's the Oklahoma defense, with eight players who have started seven or more games, that really has coach Bob Stoops excited.

"Last year, we were No. 1 in the league in total defense, and that's a plus and something to build on for 2006," Stoops said.

"The defensive line has a chance to be really special, and C.J. Ah You is one of the best pass rushers in the conference. We also have a great secondary and some guys who can go to the football. We're confident defensively at all positions."

Stoops' main concern is rebuilding an offensive line that lost four starters. However it comes together, keeping Peterson healthy is imperative.

He missed all or at least half of four games last season, but still rushed for more yardage than any other Big 12 back. Peterson heads into his junior season eighth on Oklahoma's career rushing chart with 3,033 yards, needing 1,086 yards to pass school-record holder

Billy Sims.

The rest of the teams in the South carry enough issues that likely will keep them from challenging Texas and Oklahoma for divisional supremacy.

The same holds true in the North, which again takes on a mixed-up look. On paper, Nebraska appears capable of making another step forward in Bill Callahan's third season. But concerns about a young running back group, the offensive line, the gut of the defense (tackles and safeties), and punting, should keep folks in Lincoln from making non-refundable travel plans for the Big 12 championship game.

Still, the Huskers have one of the top returning quarterbacks in the league in senior Zac Taylor and a six-pack of linebackers that could be as strong as any in the country.

"There's no doubt in my mind that our kids will be ready for the season," said Callahan, 13-10 in his two seasons at Nebraska.

"Zac Taylor gives us continuity, which is huge in our system. Zac has had a great spring. He has a better grasp at what we are doing and is really taking command over the situation and has accepted all the challenges."

— Steve Pivovar

Most
Valuable
Player



Adrian Peterson
RB, Oklahoma

Offensive
Player of the
Year



Bret Meyer
QB, Iowa State

Defensive
Player of the
Year



Adam Carriker
DE, Nebraska

Newcomer
of the
Year



Sergio Kindle
LB, Texas

HONOR ROLL

Most Accurate Passer	Bret Meyer, QB	Iowa State
Strongest Arm	Zac Taylor, QB	Nebraska
Best Scrambler	Stephen McGee, QB	Texas A&M
Cooliest in the Clutch	Mack Brown, Coach	Texas
Toughest to Bring Down	Adrian Peterson, RB	Oklahoma
Best Hands	Jarrett Hicks, WR	Texas Tech
Most Dangerous Deep Threat	Todd Blythe, WR	Iowa State
Best Pass Blocker	Justin Blalock, OT	Texas
Best Run Blocker	Kasey Studdard, OG	Texas
Best Pass Rusher	Adam Carriker, DE	Nebraska
Best Cover Man	C.J. Wilson, CB	Baylor
Special Teams Demon	Michael Griffin, DB	Texas

The Big Ones

SEPTEMBER 2

Montana State at Colorado
Illinois State at Kansas State

SEPTEMBER 9

Ohio State at Texas

SEPTEMBER 16

Nebraska at USC
Iowa State at Iowa
Texas A&M at Army

SEPTEMBER 23

Colorado at Georgia
Iowa State at Texas

SEPTEMBER 30

Texas Tech at Texas A&M
Kansas at Nebraska

OCTOBER 7

Texas vs. Oklahoma (Dallas)
Nebraska at Iowa State

OCTOBER 14

Nebraska at Kansas State

OCTOBER 21

Texas at Nebraska
Colorado at Oklahoma

OCTOBER 28

Texas at Texas Tech
Oklahoma at Missouri

NOVEMBER 4

Missouri at Nebraska
Oklahoma at Texas A&M

NOVEMBER 11

Texas at Kansas State
Texas Tech at Oklahoma

NOVEMBER 24

Colorado at Nebraska
Texas A&M at Texas

NOVEMBER 25

Oklahoma at Oklahoma State
Kansas at Missouri

Will the Buffs score 50 to open the Dan Hawkins era in Boulder?
For first time in 18 seasons, Bill Snyder won't be on K-State sideline.

Longhorns used last-minute victory over Bucks to jumpstart title run.

Measuring-stick game for Nebraska's progress.
Hawkeyes' offense will put Cyclones defense to severe test.
Aggies' band can show Army's cadets a thing or two about marching.

Buffaloes wrap up challenging non-league slate between the hedges.
Cyclones haven't had to face Longhorns for past two years.

Raiders' young quarterbacks get Big 12 baptism with tough early trip.
Jayhawks haven't won in Lincoln since LBJ was president.

Can Longhorns make it two in a row over Sooners?
Huskers have watched Cyclones celebrate in past two games in Ames.

K-State might be using frosh QB Josh Freeman, a one-time NU commit.

Longhorns posted dramatic victories in their last two trips to Lincoln.
Oklahoma defense will look to shut down Dan Hawkins' offense.

Longhorns have struggled in recent visits to SBC Stadium in Lubbock.
Sooners, then Huskers, put make-or-break twist to Mizzu's midseason.

Tigers spanked NU last season but Brad Smith no longer around.
Sooners could turn up the heat under Dennis Franchione.

Longhorns are the kind of team KSU hasn't beaten in a while.
Sooners still convinced Taurean Henderson didn't score on last play.

Visiting team has won the last four times these rivals have met.
Aggies have been on the short end of the score in past six meetings.

Adrian Peterson could top the 237 yards he gained in last season's meeting.
Gary Pinkel might get run out if Missouri loses fourth straight to KU.

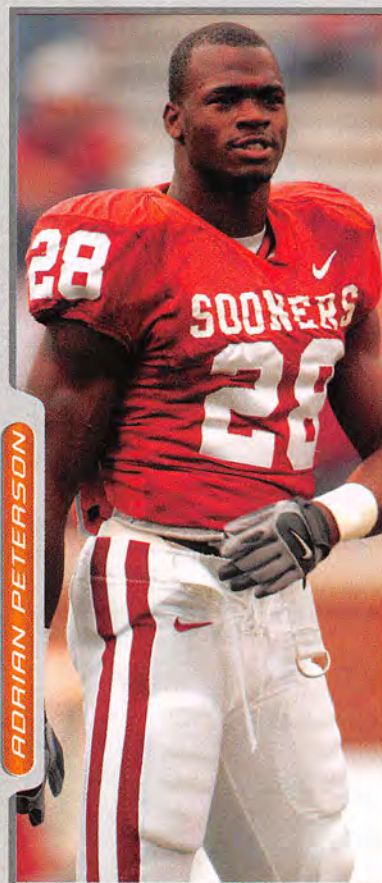


Photo by John Williamson

ADRIAN PETERSON

Bowl Connections

Champion BCS (National Title Game if ranked No. 1 or No. 2, otherwise Fiesta)

- Big 12 #2 Cotton vs. SEC #2
- Big 12 #3 Holiday vs. Pac-10 #2
- Big 12 #4 Alamo vs. Big 10 #4
- Big 12 #5 Sun or Gator vs. ACC or Pac-10
- Big 12 #6 Insight vs. Big 10
- Big 12 #7 Independence vs. SEC
- Big 12 #8 Houston vs. SEC

Note: A decision about the future of the Houston Bowl was to be made in summer.

1. Adrian Peterson	RB	Jr.	Oklahoma	A once-a-decade combination of power and speed?
2. Justin Blalock	OL	Sr.	Texas	Latest in a string of potential first-round OL for Horns.
3. Rufus Alexander	LB	Sr.	Oklahoma	Intense performer with speed to cover entire field.
4. Adam Carriker	DE	Sr.	Nebraska	More than just a pass rusher, he can jam point of attack.
5. Jarrett Hicks	WR	Sr.	Texas Tech	Soft hands and speed to be a deep threat.
6. Tim Crowder	DE	Sr.	Texas	Great feet, closing speed makes him solid backside pursuer.
7. Kasey Studdard	OG	Sr.	Texas	Aggressive and athletic with NFL bloodlines.
8. Joel Filani	WR	Sr.	Texas Tech	Sharper focus means he could make it big on next level.
9. Michael Griffin	S	Sr.	Texas	Former RB now a playmaker on defense and special teams.
10. Mason Crosby	K	Sr.	Colorado	Just a kicker ... and lethal enough to be first-day draft pick.



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Hawk and Prince Move to Center Stage

A Hawk and a Prince are the new kids on the Big 12 block.

Dan Hawkins at Colorado and Ron Prince at Kansas State are new head coaches at schools where the programs had a certain old-school flavor.

Hawkins takes over for hard-nosed Gary Barnett, whose system produced four of the past five Big 12 North Division titles. Prince replaces a legend at Kansas State, taking over for Bill Snyder.

How old school was Snyder? Not exactly an iPod guy ... you won't find him text messaging on his Razr ... the man doesn't even know how to use e-mail.

Prince is 30 years younger than Snyder, who took Kansas State from the depths to unprecedented heights during his 17-year run. Prince's players are getting used to a style that is 180 degrees different from that of Snyder's.

"If you were talking to Coach Snyder," senior linebacker Brandon Archer said, "either something had to be done, or you were in trouble. Coach Prince's door is open at all times. You can say hello, watch TV."

That doesn't mean that things are getting warm and fuzzy in Manhattan. Prince, the second-youngest head coach in Division I-A, maintains that he is not very different than the man he replaced.

"I think people get confused in styles and processes," Prince said. "If you just think about the differences in our ages, I think that maybe addresses the styles and processes. I think our core values ... we have a lot more in common than we

do different.

"Everybody thinks coaching is wearing a bad-looking sweat suit and yelling and cussing a lot, and demanding and being demeaning and being this curmudgeon. I might have been that coach when I got to some of these places I coached in the past. I tried to grow out of that."

Prince comes to Kansas State from Virginia, where he was offensive coordinator for the past three years. He grew up 20 miles from Manhattan in Junction City, Kan., the son of a non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Riley.

"I'm very old school," Prince said. "Growing up a military kid, particularly in an NCO's house, there's not a lot of foolishness going on."

Anyone stumbling across a Colorado practice in the spring might have mistakenly assumed that it was fun and games for the Buffaloes.

Hawkins had his players compete to see how far they could slide on their stomachs in the snow. He lined up his 300-pounders to catch punts and defend passes.

But Hawkins didn't win 83 percent of his games in five seasons at Boise State with mere fun and games. He's dead serious when it comes to the subject of keeping the Buffaloes contending for a championship.

"I thoroughly expect us to get back in the mix," Hawkins said. "We have a good nucleus of players. Gary brought great kids in here. We have to get up with them, and they have to catch up with us on what we want them to do."

Things figure to be a little more wide open offensively. Boise State ranked in the Top 10 nationally in scoring the past four seasons and regularly averaged more than 200 yards a game each running and passing.

"We'll try to do some innovative things," Hawkins said. "We are not afraid to do reverse passes and throwbacks and double passes."

Real Calm Under Real Pressure

Bob Stoops blacked out one afternoon in the offseason ... and couldn't have been more excited.

The Oklahoma coach went on the ride of his life when he flew with the Navy's Blue Angels during an air show in Fort Worth. The hour-long flight started with a vertical climb to 7,000 feet, and Stoops said at one point he and his pilot were flying upside down at about 1,000 feet.

"It was awesome. What an experience," Stoops said. "The force and power in the jet and the precision and skill of the pilot are overwhelming. It was just amazing."

Stoops experienced G-forces up to 7.8 during one turn.

"He lost me there. You just black out for a second or two," Stoops said. "The pilot was talking me through it the entire time. Of course, it doesn't faze them a bit."

NU's Glenn Knocking On Wood

Nebraska I-back Cody Glenn, expected to

Four-Year Standings

Maybe an East-West split might work a little better. As it is, Colorado is the only team in the North Division that has a winning record in conference action over the past four years.

In the South, meantime, Texas has finally caught Oklahoma, and Baylor finally got itself out of the division cellar last season, so it has something to build upon.

One of the biggest surprises, though, is Texas A&M struggling along, having been to just one bowl in this four-year snapshot. Now entering his fourth season, Aggies coach Dennis Franchione has players he recruited ... so a move in the right direction would be a good move at this point.

Northern Division	BIG 12	Pct.	All	Pct	C	BCS	B	Comment
Colorado	19-13	.594	29-23	.558	3/1	0	3	One team in North with winning Big 12 mark.
Kansas State	16-16	.500	31-19	.620	1/1	1	2	Can Wildcats recover from sudden fade?
Nebraska	15-17	.469	30-20	.600	0/0	0	3	Finally optimism, but time to make a move.
Missouri	13-19	.406	25-23	.521	0/0	0	2	Now what for the Tigers?
Iowa State	12-20	.375	23-27	.460	1/0	0	3	Cyclones seeking consistency.
Kansas	8-24	.250	19-29	.396	0/0	0	2	Jayhawks look for successive bowl trips.
Southern Division	BIG 12	Pct.	All	Pct	C	BCS	B	Comment
Texas	28-4	.875	45-6	.882	2/1	2	4	Longhorns finally overtake Sooners!
Oklahoma	28-4	.875	44-9	.830	3/2	3	4	So, UT has now won once in six years.
Texas Tech	20-12	.625	34-17	.667	0/0	0	4	Are Raiders the Big 12's No. 3 program now?
Oklahoma State	15-17	.469	28-22	.560	0/0	0	3	Lousy 2005 is a setback for Cowboys.
Texas A&M	13-19	.406	22-25	.468	0/0	0	1	Only Baylor has fewer bowl trips!!
Baylor	5-27	.187	13-33	.283	0/0	0	0	Not last in '05; things are looking up!

Note: C=Championship or co-championship; BCS=BCS Bowls; B=Bowls

contend for a starting spot this fall, escaped serious injury when involved in a car accident on his way home for the summer.

Glenn, from Rusk, Texas, was driving from Lincoln when the accident occurred in May. According to Glenn's high school coach, Wayne Mahaffey, the car Glenn was driving drove into the back of a semi-trailer truck.

Mahaffey told *The Omaha World-Herald* that Glenn's car veered into the median, momentarily crossing into the northbound lane, and then came back into the southbound lane. Glenn did not require medical attention.

"He got off extremely lucky," Mahaffey said. "No physical problems for him at all, and nobody else got hurt. It could have been a tragedy — and not even a bump."

Glenn rushed for 131 yards in seven games last season and was second among Husker I-backs with four touchdowns. The 6-0, 230-pound sophomore is expected to challenge Marlon Lucky for the No. 1 spot in the fall.

Cotton Bowl Keeps Red River Rivalry

The Red River Rivalry will remain in Dallas until at least 2010.

Officials at Texas and Oklahoma announced during the offseason that they've agreed to keep their annual football game at the Cotton Bowl for another five years, replacing the current contract

that runs through 2008. The game has been played on a neutral field in Dallas every year since 1929.

"The experience has been wonderful," Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds said in a statement. "The game is a tradition."

But school officials had been concerned the 75-year-old stadium had long ago stopped being a premier facility and considered moving the game to their home fields. Dallas officials had proposed a \$50-million renovation that would push capacity beyond 90,000. The new deal does not require any improvements to the stadium. Any renovation decisions would be made by the city of Dallas or the Texas State Fair.

That's Miami, Fla. ... not Miami, Ohio

What in the name of Snyder is going on at Kansas State? Snyder was infamous in his 17 seasons as head coach for loading up the Wildcats' non-conference schedule with cupcake opponents.

Prince has scheduled a home-and-home series with Miami for the 2011 and 2012 season. The Hurricanes have scheduled an appearance in Manhattan on Sept. 8, 2012, although there is talk the game will be moved to Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City.

Extra Points

Iowa State linebacker Matt Robertson's career end came to a premature end when he tested

positive for a nutritional substance banned by the NCAA. The violation carries an automatic one-season suspension. Robertson tied for the team lead in tackles last season with 103, while starting all 12 games his junior season. He red-shirted during his freshman year. His only option to play next season is to transfer to a non-Division I-A program. ...

Sign that the times they are a'changing: Last season, Nebraska passed 444 times and rushed 420 times. ...

Texas A&M head coach Dennis Franchione says he is impressed with linebacker Mark Dodge, 25, a junior college transfer who spent four years in the Army and was stationed at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, when American Airlines Flight 77 was flown into the building by terrorists. Franchione said Dodge comes to the sport with "more of a purpose and mission" than many younger players. Dodge made six tackles in the spring game. ...

Kansas' possible starting quarterback in 2006 sat out the 2005 season, in part, because of a heart condition that led to surgery. Redshirt freshman Kerry Meier, brother of Kansas State quarterback Dylan Meier, passed for 184 yards in the Jayhawks' spring game. He threw for three touchdowns and ran for another.

The Big 12 had the national championship team, but it was a disappointing year for the league in terms of producing NFL talent. The conference had 29 players selected, the lowest figure among the five biggest conferences: the ACC had 51, followed by the Big Ten (41), SEC (37) and Pac-10 (32).

Texas produced the two highest picks — Vince Young at No. 3 overall and Michael Huff at No. 7 — but there wasn't much else elite talent in the league, with only 11 selections in the first three rounds.

Rd.	Pick	Saylor	Pos.	NFL Team
7	229	Willie Andrews	CB	New England
Rd.	Pick	Colorado	Pos.	NFL Team
2	46	Joe Klopfenstein	TE	St. Louis
5	147	Jeremy Bloom	WR	Philadelphia
5	166	Quinn Synniewski	TE	Baltimore
6	180	Lawrence Vickers	FB	Cleveland
Rd.	Pick	Iowa State	Pos.	NFL Team
5	151	Tim Dobbins	ILB	San Diego
Rd.	Pick	Kansas State	Pos.	NFL Team
6	187	Jeromey Clary	OT	San Diego
Rd.	Pick	Nebraska	Pos.	NFL Team
2	40	Daniel Bullocks	SS	Detroit
6	203	Sam Koch	P	Baltimore
6	206	Le Kevin Smith	DT	New England
7	220	Titus Adams	DT	N.Y. Jets
Rd.	Pick	Missouri	Pos.	NFL Team
4	103	Brad Smith	WR	N.Y. Jets
7	243	Tony Palmer	G	St. Louis

Rd.	Pick	Oklahoma	Pos.	NFL Team
1	23	Davin Joseph	G	Tampa Bay
2	56	Chris Chester	C	Baltimore
3	73	Dusty Dvoracek	DT	Chicago
3	78	Travis Wilson	WR	Cleveland
3	80	Clint Ingram	OLB	Jacksonville
6	195	J.D. Runnels	FB	Chicago
Rd.	Pick	Oklahoma State	Pos.	NFL Team
6	199	Charlie Johnson	OT	Indianapolis
Rd.	Pick	Texas	Pos.	NFL Team
1	3	Vince Young	QB	Tennessee
1	7	Michael Huff	SS	Oakland
2	48	Cedric Griffin	CB	Minnesota
3	86	Dave Thomas	TE	New England
5	141	Jonathan Scott	OT	Detroit
7	226	Rodrique Wright	DT	Miami
Rd.	Pick	Texas A&M	Pos.	NFL Team
6	183	Johnny Jolly	DT	Green Bay
6	193	Reggie McNeal	QB	Cincinnati
Rd.	Pick	Texas Tech	Pos.	NFL Team
7	224	Whitley, E.J.	C	Dallas

RATING THE BIG 12

QUARTERBACKS

Iowa State

Nebraska

Oklahoma

Baylor

Kansas State

Texas Tech

Texas

Missouri

Oklahoma St.

Texas A&M

Colorado

Kansas

Almost half of the league's teams, including defending national champion Texas, figure to open the season with a new starting quarterback.

The competition in Austin is most intriguing, of course. Redshirt freshman Colt McCoy and Jevan Snead, a Parade All-American who graduated from high school a semester early, will continue to compete in the fall to replace Rose Bowl MVP Vince Young.

In his first two seasons as Iowa State's starter, Bret Meyer has completed 62 percent of his passes while throwing for 4,802 yards. A junior, Meyer already ranks fourth on ISU's career passing chart and third in total offense.

Zac Taylor started slowly as he adjusted from junior college to Nebraska's complex West Coast offense, but he finished strong, setting single-season school records for passing yards (2,653) and touchdowns (19).

Rhett Bomar became a starter in Oklahoma's second game, and began to show positive signs late in the season, passing 1,008 yards in the final five games, with six TDs and three interceptions.

Baylor's Shawn Bell went 5-4 as a starter while completing a school-record 59.9 percent of his passes. He gets to work out of a new spread offense this season.

RUNNING BACKS

Texas

Oklahoma

Iowa State

Oklahoma St.

Texas A&M

Kansas State

Missouri

Nebraska

Baylor

Kansas

Colorado

Texas Tech

Texas has a trio of runners in Jamaal Charles, Selvin Young and Henry Melton. Ramonce Taylor has been dismissed from the team pending resolution of a legal problem.

Taylor did start four of the last five games — finishing with 513 yards rushing and 265 yards receiving — so he will be missed if not reinstated.

But if that means more carries for Charles and Young, with Melton doing the short-yardage work, that's not a bad way to be, either. All the backs had at least one game last season in which they rushed for at least 75 yards, and all are competent receivers.

Charles, the Big 12's Offensive Freshman of the Year, led the group with 878 yards.

Oklahoma's Adrian Peterson got derailed by an ankle injury last season but still rushed for more than 1,000 yards, and rates as the top running back in college football.

Iowa State's Stevie Hicks also spent considerable time on the sidelines with an undisclosed injury.

A healthy Hicks, along with short-yardage banger Ryan Kock, gives the Cyclones' a solid 1-2 punch.

Oklahoma State has a budding star in Mike Hamilton, who rushed for 961 yards as a freshman. Only Peterson's 1,104 yards were more by a Big 12 back in 2005.

RECEIVERS

Texas Tech

Texas

Iowa State

Oklahoma St.

Kansas State

Missouri

Oklahoma

Nebraska

Texas A&M

Baylor

Kansas

Colorado

If Texas Tech coach Mike Leach can find a quarterback (chances are good that he will), the Red Raiders have no shortage of receivers who can catch the ball.

Returning starters Jarrett Hicks, Joel Filani and Robert Johnson combined for 197 receptions, 2,853 yards and 22 touchdowns. Hicks and Filani earned first-team all-league honors, while Johnson was a second-team selection.

Texas also has an experienced group of receivers. Billy Pittman, a former high school quarterback, led the group with 34 catches and 750 yards. Four of Pittman's catches resulted in gains of 62 yards or more. Junior Limas Sweed emerged as a big-play threat, with 36 receptions for 545 yards, setting a career high with eight catches in the Rose Bowl.

Iowa State has starters back in Todd Blythe and Austin Flynn, along with the tight end tandem of Ben Barkema and Walter Nickel. Blythe, a junior, already holds the school record with 18 touchdown receptions, and he's averaged more than 20 yards on his 90 career receptions.

The Cyclones' receiving corps is still deep, even if Jon Davis (Achilles' injury in the spring) doesn't make it back.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Texas

Texas Tech

Iowa State

Kansas State

Missouri

Oklahoma St.

Nebraska

Colorado

Texas A&M

Baylor

Oklahoma

Kansas

Texas lost a pair of All-Americans from a line that paved the way for the Longhorns to score an NCAA-record 652 points and gain a school-record 6,657 yards. Jonathan Scott and Will Allen will be missed, but the Longhorns have more All-American candidates.

Leading the way is right tackle Justin Blalock, who has the look of a high NFL draft pick. There are also stars at center (Lyle Sendlein) and guard (Kasey Studdard), with Tony Hills and Cedric Dockery the leading candidates to replace Scott and Allen.

Guard Manuel Ramirez, a second-team all-league pick last season, anchors a Texas Tech front that includes three other returning starters — tackles Gabe Hall and Glenn January, and center Brandon Jones.

Iowa State also returns four starters and has honors candidates in center Scott Stephenson and Aaron Brant, a starter in 34 straight games.

Kansas State's injury-wracked line took its lumps last season, but the Wildcats return six players with starting experience; senior guard Greg Wafford is the best of the bunch. The interior of K-State's line should be especially strong.

Looks Like Texas Just Needs a Quarterback

DEFENSIVE LINE

Oklahoma

Texas

Missouri

Nebraska

Oklahoma St.

Colorado

Texas Tech

Kansas State

Texas A&M

Iowa State

Baylor

Kansas

Oklahoma is absolutely loaded with talent at the ends, with returning starters C.J. Ah You (the Big 12's Defensive Newcomer of the Year) and Calvin Thibodeaux, the team leader in 2005 with 10 sacks. But that's not all.

Larry Birdine, a preseason All-Big 12 pick last year, is back from injury, as is John Williams.

The Sooners must replace Dusty Dvoracek at tackle, but Carl Pendleton returns, and there is fine depth. Big things are expected from freshman Gerald McCoy, the nation's No. 1 prospect at the position.

As on offense, Texas loses a pair of key contributors on the defensive line. All-American Rod Wright and Larry Dibles are gone, but four very good players return to maintain a high level of performance.

Tim Crowder, a three-year starter, and Brian Robison, a two-year starter, give the Longhorns an imposing end tandem, with super sophomore Brian Orakpo pressing for a greater role. Second-team All-Big 12 tackle Frank Okam anchors the middle, with Derek Lokey and Tully Janszen expected to step up.

Brian Smith headlines Missouri's four returning starters. Nebraska has a solid foundation with All-American prospect Adam Carriker and steady Jay Moore at ends.

LINEBACKERS

Nebraska

Texas

Oklahoma

Colorado

Missouri

Texas Tech

Kansas State

Texas A&M

Oklahoma St.

Iowa State

Kansas

Baylor

If all hands are healthy, Nebraska's linebacking corps could really put a hurt on opponents.

The Huskers lost Steve Octavien (leg), Stewart Bradley (knee) and Bo Ruud (arm) to season-ending injuries last season. All are expected to be ready this season, joining Corey McKeon, Lance Brandenburg and Phillip Dillard to give the Huskers six outstanding linebackers.

Octavien is the wild card; he earned a starting job in spring 2005, but lasted just one quarter before breaking his leg.

Texas must overcome the loss of Butkus semifinalist Aaron Harris but returns starters in Freshman All-American Rashad Bobino and Robert Killebrew. Drew Kelson made a smooth transition from safety to linebacker last season, and played key roles in Texas victories over Ohio State and Southern California.

All-American candidate Rufus Alexander and Zach Latimer finished 1-2 on Oklahoma's tackle chart last season, and highly regarded sophomores Curtis Lofton and Ryan Reynolds will compete with Demario Pleasant for the other spot in the Sooners' lineup.

Thaddeus Washington had 102 tackles, including 13 for loss, and joins Jordon Dizon to give Colorado two linebackers capable of contending for postseason honors.

SECONDARY

Oklahoma

Colorado

Texas

Texas A&M

Nebraska

Baylor

Kansas State

Texas Tech

Missouri

Oklahoma St.

Iowa State

Kansas

Oklahoma returns two starters (and another part-timer) from a secondary that, in conference games, ranked first in completion percentage defense, second in passing efficiency defense and third in passing yardage.

Reggie Smith started at strong safety as a true freshman and is one of the league's up-and-comers; he's now at cornerback playing opposite D.J. Wolfe. There is good depth, which will improve when several newcomers make bids for playing time in August.

With only one senior among OU's projected top eight defensive backs, the Sooners' defensive backfield is only going to get better and better.

Speed in the secondary might be a concern at Colorado, but here's thinking the Buffaloes do a lot of improving with all four starters returning ... plus 2004 starter Terrence Wheatley, a cornerback, returns after missing last season due to injury.

By the upcoming season, Texas could be No. 1 in this category, led by senior Michael Griffin, who logged a team-high 124 tackles and intercepted three passes last season. Cornerback Tarell Brown has started 23 games in his Longhorn career, while promising cornerback Aaron Ross made two starts last season.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Colorado

Baylor

Oklahoma

Texas Tech

Texas

Nebraska

Iowa State

Missouri

Texas A&M

Oklahoma St.

Kansas State

Kansas

No team in the country has a special-teams weapon to match the booming leg of Colorado's Mason Crosby.

The senior All-American made 22 of 29 field goal attempts last season, and new coach Dan Hawkins says he plans to get Crosby a 70-yard attempt to try to break the NCAA record.

The Buffaloes will need to replace punter John Torp, but have a solid return man in Stephone Robinson.

Baylor punter Daniel Sepulveda is trying to join Mike Singletary as the school's only three-time All-Americans. To do so, he'll have to come back sooner than expected from a torn ACL in his (non-kicking) right knee sustained in the spring. October was the doctors' target.

The Bears also have an experienced kicker in Ryan Havens, whose 16 field goals last season were the second-highest total in school history.

Kicker Garrett Hartley and return man Reggie Smith give Oklahoma experienced performers at those positions, but punter Cody Freeby was kicked off the team for disciplinary reasons.

Texas Tech's Alex Trlica finished second in the Big 12 in kick scoring and converted 13 of 18 field goal attempts, and the Red Raiders also return punter Alex Reyes.

THE RACE

From the beginning of the season — right from September 10 when Vince Young led Texas past Ohio State — the Longhorns didn't feel as though they were very involved in the Big 12 race. That had almost immediately become a foregone conclusion.

And by early October, when they dispatched Oklahoma, 45-12, the Longhorns were biding their time for their chance to take on top-ranked Southern California in the Rose Bowl. But if they were bored by their succession of big wins — they scored at least 40 points in every conference game — it didn't show.

Week by week, the Big 12 race became more and more anticlimactic as Texas became better and better. The big test was supposed to come from Texas Tech ... but that went 52-17. And by the time of the Big 12 championship game, Colorado was in no position to serve as the Longhorns' road bump — that was a 70-3 rout.

THE CHAMPION

Texas (13-0) became the third Big 12 Conference team in the nine years of its existence to capture the national championship (joining 1997 Nebraska and 2000 Oklahoma).

This team is one for the ages, with arguably the best, most seamless offensive line and quarterback play anyone has ever seen.

THE STARS

Offensive Player of the Year: Vince Young, QB, Texas

He didn't win the Heisman Trophy, but he probably should have — and he would have, had the voting taken place after the bowl games. Rarely has a player done more for a team. He ran the offense like a point guard when necessary, and he put the whole team on his back and carried it forward when that was called for, too.

Defensive Player of the Year: Nick Reid, LB, Kansas

In a league that was all about offense in 2005, he was the leader of an outstanding defense that set a school record by allowing an average of only 83 yards a game on the ground. Reid had 13 tackles behind the line and completed a stellar career with 416 tackles to reach the all-time Big 12 top 10.

Coach of the Year: Mack Brown, Texas

He hadn't been able to win the big games. He has long been considered the best coach in America ... in February. But beating Pete Carroll and USC in a crazy, emotional national championship Rose Bowl puts those negative labels to bed.

THE BOWLS

For the fourth time in the past five seasons, the Big 12 had eight bowl teams, and with five victories — including the only one that really mattered — it was a very good bowl season, indeed.

In addition to the Longhorns' win, Oklahoma and Nebraska, in particular, hope to use the bowl wins as momentum for bigger things in 2006.

In five of the past six years, a Big 12 team has played in the BCS national championship game.

Rose	Texas 41, Southern California 38
Cotton	Alabama 13, Texas Tech 10
Houston	TCU 27, Iowa State 24
Independence	Missouri 38, South Carolina 31
Holiday	Oklahoma 17, Oregon 14
Alamo	Nebraska 32, Michigan 28
Champs Sports	Clemson 19, Colorado 10
Fort Worth	Kansas 42, Houston 13

ALL-BIG 12 TEAM

*as selected by the league coaches

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	Vince Young, Texas
RB	Adrian Peterson, Oklahoma
RB	Taurean Henderson, Texas Tech
FB	J.D. Runnels, Oklahoma
WR	Todd Blythe, Iowa State
WR	Jarrett Hicks, Texas Tech
WR	Joel Filani, Texas Tech
TE	Joe Klopfenstein, Colorado
OL	Justin Blalock, Texas
OL	Davin Joseph, Oklahoma
OL	Jonathan Scott, Texas
OL	Will Allen, Texas
OL	Mark Fenton, Colorado
PK	Mason Crosby, Colorado
AP	Charles Gordon, Kansas

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	Cody Hodges, Texas Tech
RB	Jamaal Charles, Texas
RB	Cory Ross, Nebraska
FB	Lawrence Vickers, Colorado
WR	D'Juan Woods, Oklahoma State
WR	Dominique Zeigler, Baylor
WR	Travis Wilson, Oklahoma
WR	Robert Johnson, Texas Tech
TE	David Thomas, Texas
OL	Jeromey Clary, Kansas State
OL	Manuel Ramirez, Texas Tech
OL	E.J. Whitley, Texas Tech
OL	Corey Hillard, Oklahoma State
PK	Todd Pegram, Texas A&M
AP	Stephone Robinson, Colorado

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Rod Wright, Texas
DL	Dusty Dvoracek, Oklahoma
DL	Charlton Keith, Kansas
DL	Tim Crowder, Texas
DL	Nick Leaders, Iowa State
LB	Rufus Alexander, Oklahoma
LB	Nick Reid, Kansas
LB	Aaron Harris, Texas
LB	Michael Huff, Texas
DB	Dwayne Slay, Texas Tech
DB	Cedric Griffin, Texas
DB	Willie Andrews, Baylor
DB	LaMarcus Hicks, Iowa State
P	John Torp, Colorado

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Adam Carriker, Nebraska
DL	Brent Curvey, Iowa State
DL	Keyunta Dawson, Texas Tech
DL	Calvin Thibodeaux, Oklahoma
DL	Jermial Ashley, Kansas
DL	Frank Okam, Texas
LB	Brian Iwuh, Colorado
LB	Tim Dobbins, Iowa State
LB	Clint Ingram, Oklahoma
LB	Justin Warren, Texas A&M
DB	Charles Gordon, Kansas
DB	Chijioke Onyenegecha, Oklahoma
DB	Daniel Bullocks, Nebraska
P	Daniel Sepulveda, Baylor

THE STANDINGS

NORTH

Team	B12	Pct.	PF	PA	All	Pct.	PF	PA
Colorado	5-3	.625	219	167	7-6	.538	305	307
Iowa State	4-4	.500	232	158	7-5	.583	339	230
Nebraska	4-4	.500	201	208	8-4	.667	296	252
Missouri	4-4	.500	200	236	7-5	.583	369	350
Kansas	3-5	.375	127	210	7-5	.583	269	264
Kansas State	2-6	.250	179	258	5-6	.455	289	305

SOUTH

Team	B12	Pct.	PF	PA	All	Pct.	PF	PA
Texas	8-0	1.000	405	137	13-0	1.000	652	213
Texas Tech	6-2	.750	264	183	9-3	.750	473	226
Oklahoma	6-2	.750	241	190	8-4	.667	323	277
Texas A&M	3-5	.375	218	279	5-6	.455	352	343
Baylor	2-6	.250	140	240	5-6	.455	236	291
Oklahoma State	1-7	.125	164	321	4-7	.364	222	344

2005 BIG 12 LEADERS

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

PASS EFFICIENCY	G	ATT	CMP	INT	PCT	YDS	TD	RATING
1. Vince Young, Texas	13	325	212	10	65.2	3036	26	163.9
2. Cody Hodges, Texas Tech	12	531	353	12	66.5	4238	31	148.3
3. Bret Meyer, Iowa State	12	368	227	10	61.7	2876	19	138.9
4. Reggie McNeal, Texas A&M	10	265	141	9	53.2	1963	16	128.6
5. Joel Klatt, Colorado	12	400	241	8	60.3	2696	14	124.4
6. Shawn Bell, Baylor	10	320	190	6	59.4	1964	12	119.6
7. Zac Taylor, Nebraska	12	430	237	12	55.1	2653	19	115.9
8. Brad Smith, Missouri	12	399	237	9	59.4	2304	13	114.1
9. Rhett Bomar, Oklahoma	12	308	167	10	54.2	2018	10	113.5
10. Allan Etridge, Kansas State	9	213	102	7	47.9	1365	6	104.4
11. Brian Luke, Kansas	9	171	87	8	50.9	967	6	100.6

RUSHING	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG	YDS/G
1. Brad Smith, Missouri	12	229	1301	5.7	16	79	108.4
2. Adrian Peterson, Oklahoma	11	220	1108	5.0	14	84	100.7
3. Mike Hamilton, Oklahoma State	11	193	961	5.0	1	83	87.4
4. Vince Young, Texas	13	155	1050	6.8	12	80	80.8
5. Courtney Lewis, Texas A&M	9	109	723	6.6	7	73	80.3
6. Cory Ross, Nebraska	12	225	882	3.9	5	57	73.5
7. Tarean Henderson, Texas Tech	12	148	872	5.9	17	60	72.7
8. Thomas Clayton, Kansas State	9	137	637	4.6	4	80	70.8
9. Jamaal Charles, Texas	13	119	878	7.4	11	80	67.5
10. Reggie McNeal, Texas A&M	10	96	664	6.9	3	63	66.4

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	RUSH	PASS	PLAYS	YDS	YDS/G
1. Cody Hodges, Texas Tech	12	191	4238	640	4429	369.1
2. Vince Young, Texas	13	1050	3036	480	4086	314.3
3. Brad Smith, Missouri	12	1301	2304	628	3605	300.4
4. R. McNeal, Texas A&M	10	664	1963	361	2627	262.7
5. Bret Meyer, Iowa State	12	123	2876	501	2999	249.9
6. Joel Klatt, Colorado	12	3	2696	454	2699	224.9
7. Zac Taylor, Nebraska	12	-41	2653	506	2612	217.7
8. Rhett Bomar, Oklahoma	12	276	2018	398	2294	191.2
9. Shawn Bell, Baylor	10	320	1964	359	1906	190.6
10. A. Etridge, Kansas State	9	203	1365	315	1568	174.2

PUNTING	G	NO	YDS	LONG	AVG
1. Sam Koch, Nebraska	12	71	3302	84	46.5
2. Daniel Sepulveda, Baylor	11	62	2863	78	46.2
3. John Torp, Colorado	13	80	3613	72	45.2
4. Justin Brantley, Texas A&M	11	46	1989	80	43.2
5. Kyle Tucker, Kansas	12	66	2832	77	42.9
6. Alex Reyes, Texas Tech	12	49	2099	71	42.8
7. Adam Cressett, Missouri	12	57	2432	61	42.7
8. Troy Blankenship, Iowa State	12	68	2894	69	42.6
9. Cody Freeby, Oklahoma	12	71	3004	73	42.3
10. Tim Reyer, Kansas State	11	65	2620	65	40.3

INTERCEPTIONS	G	NO	YDS	TD
1. Clint Ingram, Oklahoma	12	5	63	1
C.J. Wilson, Baylor	11	5	54	0
LaMarcus Hicks, Iowa State	12	5	44	1
DeAndre Jackson, Iowa State	12	5	18	0
5. Theo Baines, Kansas	12	4	48	0
Nik Moser, Iowa State	12	4	19	0
7. Marcus King, Missouri	12	3	163	2
Steve Paris, Iowa State	12	3	58	0
Corey McKeon, Nebraska	12	3	57	1
Rodney Fowler, Kansas	12	3	49	0
Marq Carpenter, Texas A&M	3	3	45	0
Aaron Ross, Texas	13	3	40	0

SCORING	G	TD	XP	FG	2XP	PTS	PTS/G
1. Tarean Henderson, Texas Tech	12	22	0	0	0	132	11.0
2. David Pino, Texas	13	0	71	14	0	113	8.7
3. Brad Smith, Missouri	12	16	0	0	4	100	8.3
4. Alex Trlica, Texas Tech	12	0	60	13	0	99	8.2
5. Todd Pegram, Texas A&M	11	0	41	15	0	86	7.8
6. Adrian Peterson, Oklahoma	11	14	0	0	0	84	7.6
7. Mason Crosby, Colorado	13	0	32	22	0	98	7.5
8. Jordan Congdon, Nebraska	12	0	31	19	0	88	7.3
9. Bret Culbertson, Iowa State	10	0	34	12	0	70	7.0
10. Ramon Taylor, Texas	13	15	0	0	0	90	6.9

RECEIVING	G	REC	YDS	TD	LONG	AVG	YDS/G
1. Joel Filani, Texas Tech	12	65	1048	8	62	16.1	87.3
2. Todd Blythe, Iowa State	12	51	1000	9	63	19.6	83.3
3. D'Juan Woods, Okla. St.	11	56	879	8	49	15.7	79.9
4. Robert Johnson, Texas Tech	12	67	955	4	67	14.3	79.6
5. Jarrett Hicks, Texas Tech	11	65	850	10	47	13.1	77.3
6. Jason Carter, Texas A&M	11	54	827	6	71	15.3	75.2
7. Jordy Nelson, Kansas State	11	45	669	8	80	14.9	60.8
8. Billy Pittman, Texas	13	34	750	5	75	22.1	57.7
9. Nate Swift, Nebraska	12	45	641	7	34	14.2	53.4
10. Mark Simmons, Kansas	12	44	631	4	50	14.3	52.6

TEAM STATISTICS

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	RUSH	PASS	PLAYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Texas	13	3574	3083	941	6657	7.1	81	512.1
2. Texas Tech	12	1284	4666	896	5950	6.6	59	495.8
3. Texas A&M	11	2584	2281	773	4865	6.3	43	442.3
4. Missouri	12	2463	2694	981	5157	5.3	41	429.8
5. Oklahoma	12	2226	2131	862	4357	5.1	37	363.1
6. Iowa State	12	1328	2876	859	4204	4.9	39	350.3
7. Kansas State	11	1522	2215	750	3737	5.0	31	339.7
8. Colorado	13	1434	2896	881	4330	4.9	30	333.1
9. Kansas	12	1608	2348	821	3956	4.8	28	329.7
10. Oklahoma State	11	1693	1880	754	3573	4.7	27	324.8
11. Nebraska	12	1152	2692	864	3844	4.4	30	320.3
12. Baylor	11	1209	2288	777	3497	4.5	23	317.9

TOTAL DEFENSE	G	RUSH	PASS	PLAYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Texas	13	1702	2236	897	3938	4.4	25	302.9
2. Kansas	12	999	2640	834	3639	4.4	28	303.2
3. Oklahoma	12	1087	2593	830	3680	4.4	31	306.7
4. Nebraska	12	1491	2495	874	3986	4.6	27	332.2
5. Texas Tech	12	1865	2165	847	4030	4.8	27	335.8
6. Iowa State	12	1232	2908	860	4140	4.8	22	345.0
7. Colorado	13	1303	3236	944	4539	4.8	33	349.2
8. Kansas State	11	1418	2536	775	3954	5.1	37	359.5
9. Missouri	12	1816	2604	861	4420	5.1	41	368.3
10. Baylor	11	1779	2379	828	4158	5.0	35	378.0
11. Oklahoma State	11	2241	2356	766	4597	6.0	39	417.9
12. Texas A&M	11	1531	3351	818	4882	6.0	40	443.8

KICKOFF RETURNS	G	NO	YDS	TD	AVG
1. Texas	13	22	593	0	27.0
2. Baylor	11	34	813	1	23.9
3. Iowa State	12	31	725	0	23.4
4. Oklahoma State	11	46	940	0	20.4
5. Kansas	12	26	527	0	20.3
6. Nebraska	12	31	611	0	19.7
7. Missouri	12	38	743	0	19.6
8. Colorado	13	36	697	0	19.4
9. Kansas State	11	36	694	1	19.3
10. Texas Tech	12	25	466	0	18.6
11. Oklahoma	12	39	709	0	18.2
12. Texas A&M	11	31	554	0	17.9

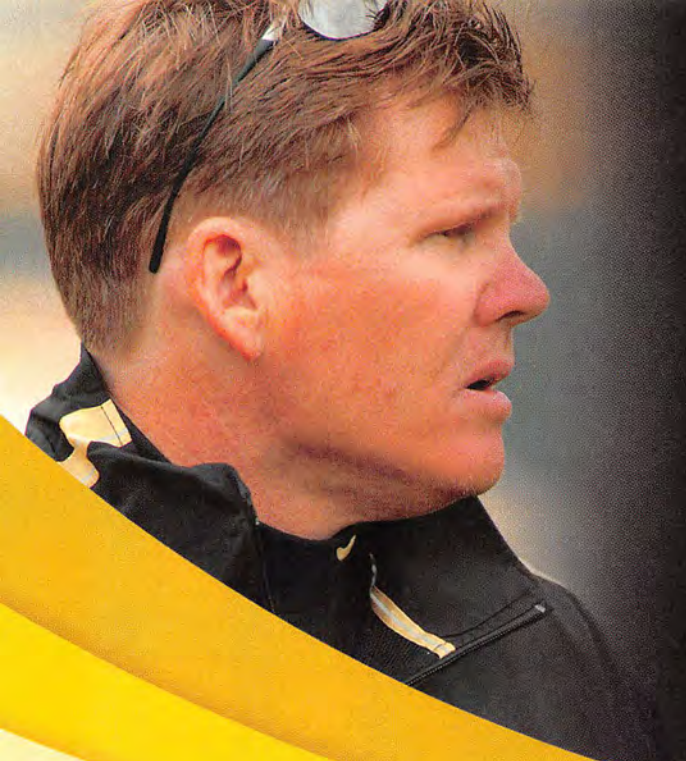
SCORING OFFENSE	G	TD	XP	2XP	DXP	FG	S	PTS	AVG
1. Texas	13	88	76	2	0	14	1	652	50.2
2. Texas Tech	12	62	60	1	0	13	0	473	39.4
3. Texas A&M	11	44	41	0	0	15	1	352	32.0
4. Missouri	12	47	39	3	0	14	0	369	30.8
5. Iowa State	12	42	39	1	0	14	2	339	28.2
6. Oklahoma	12	40	37	0	0	14	2	323	26.9
7. Kansas State	11	36	26	3	0	11	4	289	26.3
8. Nebraska	12	34	31	1	0	19	1	296	24.7
9. Colorado	13	33	32	1	0	23	2	305	23.5
10. Kansas	12	32	27	2	0	14	2	269	22.4
11. Baylor	11	27	22	2	0	16	0	236	21.5
12. Oklahoma State	11	27	23	2	0	11	0	222	20.2

SCORING DEFENSE	G	TD	XP	2XP	FG	S	PTS	AVG
1. Texas	13	25	21	0	14	0	213	16.4
2. Texas Tech	12	28	28	0	10	0	226	18.8
3. Iowa State	12	25	22	2	18	0	230	19.2
4. Nebraska	12	30	27	0	13	3	252	21.0
5. Kansas	12	33	28	1	10	3	264	22.0
6. Oklahoma	12	34	27	2	14	0	277	23.1
7. Colorado	13	37	34	0	17	0	307	23.6
8. Baylor	11	36	31	1	14	0	291	26.5
9. Kansas State	11	38	37	0	12	2	305	27.7
10. Missouri	12	45	40	1	12	1	350	29.2
11. Texas A&M	11	43	37	1	14	2	343	31.2
12. Oklahoma State	11	42	39	1	17	0	344	31.3

PUNT RETURNS	G	NO	YDS	TD	AVG
1. Texas	13	43	671	4	15.6
2. Nebraska	12	50	647	0	12.9
3. Missouri	12	21	259	1	12.3
4. Kansas	12	53	640	2	12.1
5. Baylor	11	36	413	1	11.5
6. Kansas State	11	31	347	3	11.2
7. Colorado	13	30	311	2	10.4
8. Texas Tech	12	42	414	1	9.9
9. Texas A&M	11	15	136	1	9.1
10. Iowa State	12	26	223	0	8.6
11. Oklahoma	12	30	222	0	7.4
12. Oklahoma State	11	24	176	0	7.3

RUSHING OFFENSE	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Texas	13	605	3574	5.9	55	274.9
2. Texas A&M	11	452	2584	5.7	24	234.9
3. Missouri	12	512	2463	4.8	26	205.2
4. Oklahoma	12	526	2226	4.2	27	185.5
5. Oklahoma State	11	432	1693	3.9	16	153.9
6. Kansas State	11	432	1522	3.5	16	138.4
7. Kansas	12	425	1608	3.8	15	134.0
8. Iowa State	12	491	1328	2.7	20	110.7
9. Colorado	13	428	1434	3.4	15	110.3
10. Baylor	11	385	1209	3.1	10	109.9
11. Texas Tech	12	308	1284	4.2	25	107.0
12. Nebraska	12	420	1152	2.7	10	96.0

RUSHING DEFENSE	G	ATT	NET	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Kansas	12	414	999	2.4	8	83.2
2. Oklahoma	12	392	1087	2.8	11	90.6
3. Colorado	13	460	1303	2.8	18	100.2
4. Iowa State	12	414	1232	3.0	10	102.7
5. Nebraska	12	459	1491	3.2	14	124.2
6. Kansas State	11	401	1418	3.5	19	128.9
7. Texas	13	461	1702	3.7	15	130.9
8. Texas A&M	11	420	1531	3.6	19	139.2
9. Missouri	12	474	1816	3.8	23	151.3
10. Texas Tech	12	469	1865	4.0	15	155.4
11. Baylor	11	438	1771	4.1	21	161.7
12. Oklahoma State	11	452	1741	3.9	24	163.7



DAN HAWKINS' RECORD

YEAR	SCHOOL	RECORD
1993	Willamette	5-4
1994	Willamette	7-2
1995	Willamette	6-2-1
1996	Willamette	9-2
1997	Willamette	13-1
2001	Boise State	8-4
2002	Boise State	12-1
2003	Boise State	13-1
2004	Boise State	11-1
2005	Boise State	9-3

TOTAL: 93-21-1, 10 years

BOISE STATE: 53-10, 5 years

SOARING DOWN THE

BY KYLE RINGO

NEW COLORADO COACH TRIES TO TAKE THE BIG 12 BY STORM

The guy likes the big play. He's made a living with it. He's a risk taker and more than a little confident in what he's doing on the football field. He breaks the mold and celebrates over the remnants.

New Colorado coach Dan Hawkins is an unconventional thinker on and off the sideline. But this pass-happy tag is a bad rap.

Anyone who has watched Hawkins' teams at Boise State the past five years will say college football fans in Boulder and around the Big 12 Conference are in for a show. The Broncos have been among the highest scoring teams in the

nation in that span, always good for the nightly highlight shows. Now it's the Buffs' turn.

Colorado under Hawkins certainly will look different from its more conservative days in Gary Barnett's West Coast offense, which emphasized a power running game. However, the program has won four of the past five Big 12 North Division titles with that running mindset, and Hawkins isn't about to abandon it.

"I think when you talk about offense, you have to run the football," Hawkins said when he was hired in December, after Barnett was doomed by several years of turmoil and a 70-3 loss to Texas

in the Big 12 title game.

Hawkins' Boise State teams usually were balanced offensively. In fact, last year's Broncos ran the ball considerably more often than they passed: 560 runs, 390 passes.

Boise State completed the season relatively even with 2,632 yards rushing and 2,892 passing. Big plays — lots of big plays — made the difference.

With Hawkins in charge, the Buffs will stretch the field to complement the running game. That's just what he does in the passing game.

"You know us. We're going to launch it," Hawkins said. "I'm addicted to that stuff."

His first decision as leader of the black and gold was luring offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich from Arizona State and passing game coordinator and receivers coach Eric Kiesau from California, two more high-octane offensive minds. Hawkins dubbed the coaching combination "some serious voodoo" and said he was looking forward to unleashing it on his counterparts in the Big 12.

Despite those credentials, Colorado isn't going to challenge Texas Tech for its annual position atop the conference in every passing category. This won't be the same transition Nebraska experienced the past two seasons shifting from decades in option-oriented offenses to Bill Callahan's pro-style West Coast approach.

"Another part where I'm probably different is that I like throwing the ball vertical, and I'm not afraid to take some

attempted 400 passes or more, a drop from three years earlier when seven teams threw the ball that often. Offenses just weren't as effective across the board.

In Colorado, offense should be effective ... and fun.

Hawkins' approach to life and the gridiron has caught on quick in a quirky college town that seems to suit him well. His players engaged in belly sliding contests in the snow, big-man punt return, little-guy goal-line sessions and other bizarre incarnations in spring practices designed to build team unity.

In the process, the Buffs fell in love with their new coach and the game all over again.

"I want them to have fun," he said. "I want them to enjoy it out here. I don't want it to be such a grind.

"I want them to come out here with

look like — the two favorites to win the job are opposites.

Junior Bernard Jackson is a threat to run each time the ball settles in his hands, *a la* former Missouri quarterback Brad Smith. Fellow junior Brian White is the prototypical strong-armed, drop-back passer.

Both players are excited to finally get a crack at leading the team after sitting behind three-year starter Joel Klatt for so long. Klatt's backup the past three years, senior James Cox, should also be in the mix when practices begin in August.

"We didn't throw the ball deep half as much last year as we do now," Jackson said. "It's fun to get out there and throw the ball down the field and be out there making plays."

Hawkins said he is perfectly willing to

FIELD WITH HAWK

chances and do some funky stuff," Hawkins said. "You can't play not to lose, and I've never played that way.

"To teach a kid to be successful, you have to get outside your comfort zone and not be afraid to take some risks and possibly fail. We will not be afraid to go out of the box. Just because you haven't seen it or somebody hasn't done it doesn't mean we're not going to try it. I think it's fun for the kids and fun for the fans."

The perception is that the Big 12 is getting away from its roots in the running game, thanks to the addition of Hawkins, Nebraska's big change, Baylor adopting the Texas Tech style, and the proliferation of the Spread offense.

That could prove to be true over time, but the running game was still popular in the conference last year, even though only one running back topped 1,000 yards.

In 2005, only four Big 12 teams

a sense of wonderment ... what's going to happen today and what are we going to do? It's not like basketball where you come out and play basketball every day.

"In football, you have to do a whole bunch of other garbage that has nothing to do with the game. I love just throwing them a little curveball, making it exciting, making it interesting."

The great unknown heading into Hawkins' first season in a BCS conference is whether Barnett left him the talent needed to execute his system and continue his winning ways.

Hawkins is the first to say his .813 career winning percentage is a direct result of his willingness to think outside the box and teaching his players to do the same.

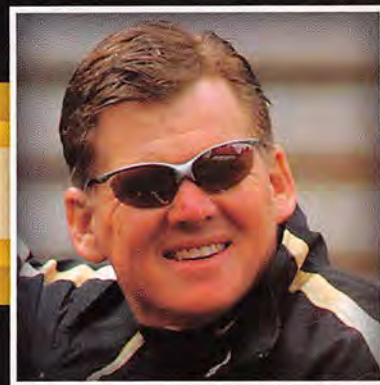
With uncertainty at quarterback heading into fall practices, it's impossible to say exactly what the CU offense will

build the system around the strengths of whichever quarterback proves to be most ready to take over the program.

Hawkins always has been an innovator, anyway. He's a self-described game-planner. He's the type of coach who will look for weaknesses in an opponent and draw up plays to use that week against that opponent. He might not use those plays again the whole season.

"You have a basis from which you work from," he said. "It's not all invented each week, but we're a big game-plan team. That can vary. There will be a bunch of stuff we add every week coming from our base package."

It's just that the base package includes going deep. A lot. ■



Photos courtesy University of Colorado

QUITE A SCORE

LINDY'S MARKS TWO DECADES OF EVENTFUL FOOTBALL IN THE HEARTLAND

By Berry Tramel



Photo by Joe Patrone/Getty Images

Houston's Andre Ware passed for 4,699 yards and 46 touchdowns in 1989.

It's been quite a 20 years for the schools in the conference that spans Middle America. From the Iowa cornfields to the Texas oil patch to the Colorado Rockies, the Big 12, formed by the beleaguered Big Eight and a Southwest Conference jailbreak, has forged an exalted place among the power leagues of college football.

It came at a price. The Big Eight, at least annually, lost some age-old rivalries. Oklahoma-Nebraska was the Miami-Florida State rivalry of the '70s and '80s. Oklahoma and Kansas played every season from 1903 through 1997, until the Big 12's split into divisions interrupted the series.

Tradition took an even bigger hit with the demise of the Southwest Conference. SMU, TCU and Rice had been part of the SWC for three-quarters of a century; Houston had joined in 1976. But in 1995, Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and Baylor bolted, joining the Big Eight schools to form the Big 12.

The leftovers have struggled in the wake.

SMU, which temporarily lost its program to the NCAA's death penalty in 1987, lost its identity without the Southwest Conference. Rice ended a 29-year run of non-winning seasons with back-to-back records of 6-5 in 1992 and '93, but that momentum was lost upon news of the SWC's demise.

Even TCU, which in recent years has had some of its greatest seasons, has struggled to even find a conference home, playing in the WAC, Conference USA and Mountain West since the SWC folded.

But there are few gripes from Big 12 members. The league has provided financial and competitive stability to its members. The 10 Big 12 football championships have been won by six schools. A seventh, Tech, is the only Big 12 school to be bowl-eligible all 10 years of the league. Two more schools, Iowa State and Oklahoma State, have experienced a renaissance this decade.

The Big 12 is hard on dynasties. Nebraska's ended early in the Big 12. Oklahoma's bold attempt at national dominance has fallen just short. Texas almost surely will discover the same, coming off a storybook national championship engineered by quarterback supreme Vince Young.

The Big 12 formed in the middle of Osborne's shining achievement. The Huskers were 60-3 from 1993 to '97, with three national championships — the greatest college football run since Bud Wilkinson's Sooners of the '50s and Frank Leahy's Fighting Irish of the '40s. But Osborne retired, and Nebraska since has struggled to win big.

Twenty years ago, Switzer had Oklahoma riding high, but scandal brought him down, and the Sooners were mediocre throughout the '90s. Stoops changed that, going 60-7 from 2000 to 2004, but Oklahoma fell to 8-4 in 2005.

Texas A&M finished in first place in four of the last five years of the SWC, but has been

Tom Osborne, Barry Switzer and Bill McCartney checked out; Bob Stoops and Mack Brown checked in. Miracle worker Bill Snyder did both.

Oklahoma buried the wishbone. Nebraska scrapped the option. Texas Tech, out in dusty Lubbock, brought futuristic offense to college football.

Texas, Oklahoma and Colorado each won a national championship. Nebraska won three.

Barry Sanders, Rashaan Salaam, Ricky Williams, Eric Crouch and Jason White won Heismans. So did Houston's Andre Ware, whose school once rubbed shoulders in such company, but no more.

up and down in the Big 12. Colorado, a national power under McCartney (1989-94), is on its third coach since, juggling scandal and success.

But no coach impacted a program like Snyder, who turned hapless Kansas State into a player on the national stage. Snyder arrived in Manhattan in 1989 and retired in November 2005, but in between he made K-State a consistent winner. Believe it or not, Kansas State has won the Big 12 North Division three times, the same number as Nebraska.

Until 2005, the one constant over 20 years was an underachieving Texas.

Between 1983 and 2002, the Longhorns never finished a season ranked in the Top 10. Prior to 2005, consider that Texas won only two of the last 10 SWC titles and just one in the Big 12, a 1996 epic upset of Nebraska.

But Young's stupendous performance in the 2006 Rose Bowl, a 41-38 victory over Southern Cal, changed Texas' fortunes.

That Rose Bowl capped a wild 20 years that changed the face of college football in Middle America. ■

MEMORABLE STREAKS

LONGEST WINNING STREAKS

Nebraska, 1994-96 (ended by Arizona State 19-0)	26
Texas, 2004-present	20
Oklahoma, 1986-87 (ended by Miami 20-14)	20
Oklahoma, 2000-01 (ended by Nebraska 20-10)	20

LONGEST HOME WINNING STREAKS

Nebraska 1991-98 (ended by Texas 20-16)	47
Nebraska 1998-02 (ended by Texas 27-24)	26
Kansas State 1996-00 (ended by Oklahoma 41-31)	25

LONGEST LOSING STREAKS

Kansas State 1987-89 (ended vs. North Texas 20-17)	16
Iowa State 1996-97 (ended vs. Baylor 24-17)	13
Kansas State 1986-87 (ended vs. Kansas 17-17)	13

LINDY'S BIG 12 TEAM OF THE PAST 20 YEARS

OFFENSE FIRST TEAM

QB	Vince Young, Texas, 2003-05	Tommie Frazier, Nebraska, 1992-95
RB	Thurman Thomas, Oklahoma St, 1984-87	Troy Davis, Iowa State, 1994-96
RB	Ricky Williams, Texas, 1995-98	Rashaan Salaam, Colorado, 1993-94
WR	Michael Westbrook, Colorado, 1991-94	Rashaun Woods, Oklahoma St, 2000-03
WR	Mark Clayton, Oklahoma, 2001-04	Roy Williams, Texas, 2000-03
TE	Keith Jackson, Oklahoma, 1984-87	Daniel Graham, Colorado, 1998-01
C	Aaron Taylor, Nebraska, 1994-97	Jay Leeuwenburg, Colorado, 1989-91
OL	Will Shields, Nebraska, 1989-92	Chris Naeole, Colorado, 1993-96
OL	Jammal Brown, Oklahoma, 2001-04	Leonard Davis, Texas, 1997-00
OL	Zach Wiegert, Nebraska, 1991-94	Brenden Stai, Nebraska, 1991-94
OL	Joe Garten, Colorado, 1987-90	John Clay, Missouri, 1983-86
PK	Martin Gramatica, Kansas State, 1994-98	Mason Crosby, Colorado, 2003-current
AP	Barry Sanders, Oklahoma State, 1986-88	Tony Sands, Kansas, 1988-91

DEFENSE FIRST TEAM

DL	Casey Hampton, Texas, 1996-00	Santana Dotson, Baylor, 1988-91
DL	Grant Wistrom, Nebraska, 1994-97	Jason Peter, Nebraska, 1994-97
DL	Tommie Harris, Oklahoma, 2001-03	Montae Reagor, Texas Tech, 1995-98
DL	Alfred Williams, Colorado, 1987-90	Trev Alberts, Nebraska, 1990-93
LB	Dat Nguyen, Texas A&M, 1995-98	Teddy Lehman, Oklahoma, 2000-03
LB	Derrick Johnson, Texas, 2001-03	Rocky Calmus, Oklahoma, 1998-01
LB	Brian Bosworth, Oklahoma, 1984-86	Matt Russell, Colorado, 1993-96
DB	Deon Figures, Colorado, 1988-92	Derrick Strait, Oklahoma, 2000-03
DB	Terence Newman, Kansas State, 1999-02	Thomas Everett, Baylor, 1983-86
DB	Roy Williams, Oklahoma, 1999-01	Chris Canty, Kansas State, 1994-96
DB	Michael Huff, Texas, 2002-05	Chris Hudson, Colorado, 1991-94
P	Barry Helton, Colorado, 1984-87	Daniel Sepulveda, Baylor, 2003-current

SECOND TEAM

SECOND TEAM

TOP PROGRAMS OF THE PAST 20 YEARS

1. Nebraska: Huskers have stumbled in recent years, which only makes their consistency before that all the more remarkable. Since 1986: three national championships, eight conference titles, no seats unsold, few seats unfilled. Fifteen consensus All-Americans, one Heisman, three Outlands. A legendary coach. Not a bad 20 years.

2. Oklahoma: Bottomed out in the '90s, but stout with Barry Switzer in the '80s and Bob Stoops in the 2000s.

3. Colorado: Under Bill McCartney, played for two straight national titles, 1989-90, and won one.



Ricky Williams brought a Heisman Trophy home to Austin in 1998.

(Photo by John Williamson)

LINDY'S 20-YEAR STANDINGS

SCHOOL	CONF.	PCT.	OVERALL.	PCT.	TITLES	MAJOR BOWLS	ALL BOWLS
Nebraska	118-31-1	.790	201-48-1	.806	8	13	19
Texas	109-45	.708	160-78-2	.671	4	5	13
Texas A&M	107-45-2	.701	163-76-3	.680	7	6	14
Colorado	103-44-3	.697	161-81-4	.666	4	5	16
Oklahoma	103-45-2	.693	165-69-3	.703	5	6	13
Texas Tech	88-65-1	.575	134-99-1	.575	0	1	13
Kansas State	76-72-2	.513	139-98-2	.586	1	2	11
Oklahoma State	54-93-3	.370	103-120-3	.462	0	0	6
Missouri	50-100	.333	88-137-5	.393	0	0	4
Baylor	49-104-1	.321	91-131-1	.410	0	0	4
Iowa State	45-102-3	.310	86-139-3	.384	0	0	5
Kansas	43-105-2	.293	91-135-4	.404	0	0	4

*Current Big 12 membership. Conference records include Big 8 or SWC marks.



Kordell Stewart's pass to Michael Westbrook beat Michigan in 1994.

(Photo by Tim DeFrisco/Getty Images)

UNFORGETTABLE TEAMS

- 1995 Nebraska, 13-0:** Computer analyst Jeff Sagarin selected these Huskers as the best college team of the previous 40 years. They beat Michigan State and Arizona State by a combined 89 points. Their smallest Big Eight margin was 23 points. They routed unbeaten Florida 62-24 in the Fiesta Bowl. Quarterback Tommie Frazier was a consensus All-American.
- 2005 Texas, 13-0:** Vince Young's legend is guaranteed forever. Won at Ohio State in September; then in the national championship game beat USC (a team for the ages) in a 41-38 Rose Bowl thriller.
- 2000 Oklahoma, 13-0:** Came from back of the pack to beat five Top 10 teams, and only one of those victories — against No. 1 Nebraska — came at Owen Field. Shut down Florida State 13-2 to win national championship.
- 1994 Nebraska, 13-0:** Tom Osborne's demons were chased with an Orange Bowl win over Miami for his first national title.
- 1990 Colorado, 11-1-1:** Toughest schedule ever for a national champion, which is part of the reason why the Buffs were able to win the national championship with a loss and a tie.
- 1997 Nebraska, 13-0:** Osborne's swan song: third national title in four years, but had to share with Michigan.
- 1998 Kansas State, 11-2:** Headed for national title game until shocker in Big 12 title game derailed the Wildcats' fairy tale season.
- 2004 Oklahoma, 12-1:** Star-studded cast, but ambushed by USC's star-studded cast in Orange Bowl showdown.
- 1994 Texas A&M, 10-0-1:** Great defense, but on probation and barred from a bowl game.
- 1987 Oklahoma, 11-1:** Beat Nebraska in Game of the Century II, then lost Orange Bowl to Miami, 20-14.
- 1993 Nebraska, 11-1:** Huskers unbeaten, but were ranked behind once-beaten Florida State going into the Orange Bowl. Nebraska lost 18-16.
- 1989 Colorado, 11-1:** Bill McCartney's reclamation project soared to 11-0 season before 21-6 loss to Notre Dame in Orange Bowl.
- 1992 Texas A&M, 12-1:** Little respect for SWC: 12-0 A&M ranked just fourth going into Cotton Bowl.
- 1994 Colorado, 11-1:** Kordell Stewart's miracle against Michigan ignited Buffs to No. 3 ranking.
- 2004 Texas, 11-1:** Rose Bowl thriller over Michigan set stage for Vince Young's 2005 magic.
- 2003 Oklahoma, 12-2:** Billed as an epic team until late flameout, including loss to LSU in national championship Sugar Bowl.
- 1988 Oklahoma State, 10-2:** Barry Sanders and Hart Lee Dykes led the way to national-best 47.5 points per game.
- 1986 Oklahoma, 11-1:** Option QB Jamelle Holieway at his best, but lost at Miami 28-16.
- 1999 Kansas State, 11-1:** Bill Snyder critics were quieted forever with No. 6 national ranking.
- 1998 Texas A&M, 11-3:** A shocking Big 12 champion with double-overtime upset of Kansas State.

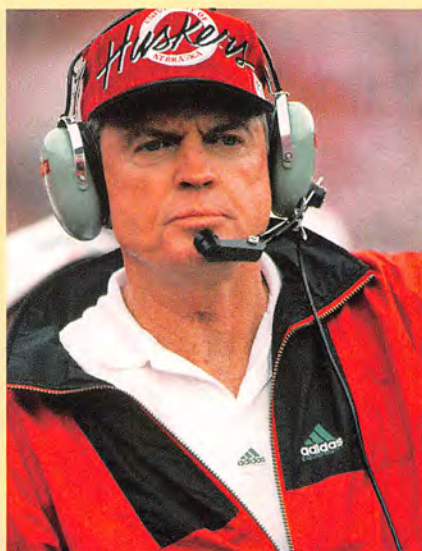


Photo by John Williamson

Tom Osborne won three national titles and could have had more at Nebraska.

UNFORGETTABLE COACHES

- Tom Osborne, Nebraska, 1973-97:** Fought an Oklahoma curse for awhile, but eventually heated up. Went 255-49-3 in 25 years, including 60-3 his final five seasons. As impressive as his three national championships are, consider that he probably could have had five or six without the benefit of a major upset.
- Bill Snyder, Kansas State, 1989-2005:** No coach, any sport, can match Snyder's feat of building an oasis in the desert. When Snyder took over, KSU was college football's worst program, with nine wins combined the previous six years and fewer wins all-time than any major-college school. Snyder went 135-69-1 in 17 seasons and made K-State a solid power.
- Barry Switzer, Oklahoma, 1973-88:** Ceremoniously fired in June 1989, but still 31-5 from 1986-88. Most important, nobody who ever saw him coach will ever forget this bootlegger's boy ... no matter what he did or didn't do once he wound up as coach of the Dallas Cowboys.
- Bill McCartney, Colorado, 1982-94:** Made CU a national power; went 73-19-4 over his last eight years and won the 1990 national title.
- Bob Stoops, Oklahoma, 1999-present:** Made it tough on all new coaches by winning the national title in his second year and going 60-7 over a five-year span.
- Mack Brown, Texas, 1998-present:** Returned the Longhorns to prominence, going 83-19 in eight years, and producing UT's first national championship in 36 years.
- R.C. Slocum, Texas A&M, 1989-2002:** Dominated at the end of the SWC, going 33-2-1 in conference during the last five years of that league's existence.
- Spike Dykes, Texas Tech, 1987-99:** Had the Red Raiders on solid ground as the Big 12 formed.
- Grant Teaff, Baylor, 1972-92:** Brought success to the Bears; went 47-32-1 from '86-92, including 29-23-1 in SWC.
- Dan McCarney, Iowa State, 1995-present:** Bill Snyder Light. Has coached beleaguered Cyclones to five bowl games in past six years.

UNFORGETTABLE PLAYERS

- Barry Sanders, TB, Oklahoma State, 1986-88:** Did he really exist? Was he really that good? The record books say he had 2,628 yards and 39 touchdowns, all in one amazing season. Sanders played on TV just once in the 1988 regular season. By the time he retired from the NFL, the answer was clear. Yes, he was that good.
- Vince Young, QB, Texas, 2003-05:** Has any player ever carried a team the way Young carried the 2005 Longhorns?
- Brian Bosworth, LB, Oklahoma, 1984-86:** The Boz: you simply couldn't invent a character like that.
- Tommie Frazier, QB, Nebraska, 1992-95:** Changed the Cornhusker culture with bowl victories.
- Roy Williams, S, Oklahoma, 1999-01:** Ultimate respect: nicknamed Superman by Texas' Roy Williams.
- Troy Davis, TB, Iowa State, 1994-96:** Jump-started the Cyclones surge, a two-time 2,000-yard rusher.

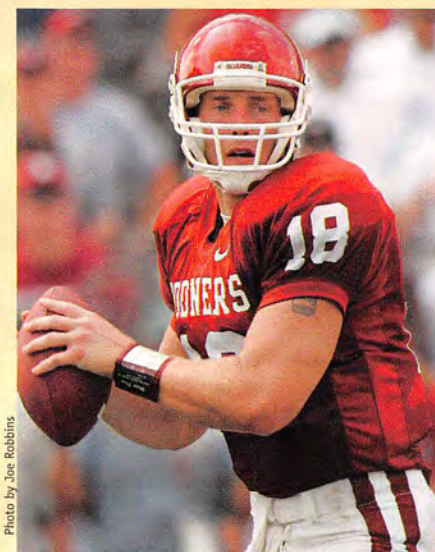


Photo by Joe Robbins

Jason White won a national title and a Heisman Trophy at Oklahoma.

7. **Jason White, QB, Oklahoma, 1999-04:** Won a Heisman (and almost two) after two knee surgeries threatened his career.
8. **Ricky Williams, TB, Texas, 1994-97:** Strange dude but broke NCAA rushing record with 6,279 yards.
9. **Lawrence Phillips, TB, Nebraska, 1993-95:** Most talented Husker runner couldn't stay out of trouble.
10. **Thurman Thomas, TB, Oklahoma State, 1984-87:** Kept Barry Sanders on the bench.
11. **Alfred Williams, DE, Colorado, 1987-90:** Symbolized Bill McCartney's recruiting upgrade.
12. **Dat Nguyen, LB, Texas A&M, 1995-98:** No list complete without a vet of the Wrecking Crew.
13. **Rashaan Salaam, TB, Colorado, 1992-94:** From eight-man high school football to the Heisman.
14. **Grant Wistrom, DE, Nebraska, 1994-97:** Little secret: Osborne won with defense.
15. **Jamelle Holieway, QB, Oklahoma, 1985-88:** Smoothest of wishbone quarterbacks.
16. **Byron Hanspard, TB, Texas Tech, 1994-96:** Greatest of many versatile Tech runners.
17. **Darren Sproles, TB, Kansas State, 2001-04:** Mighty mite rushed for 4,979 yards.
18. **Eric Crouch, QB, Nebraska, 1998-01:** Crouch almost quit as a sophomore; two years later won the Heisman.
19. **Tony Sands, TB, Kansas, 1988-91:** Ran for 396 yards in one game vs. Mizzou.

20. **Peter Gardere, QB, Texas, 1989-92:** Nondescript quarterback but went 4-0 against Oklahoma.

UNFORGETTABLE GAMES

1. **2005 Texas vs. Southern Cal:** In the national-title Rose Bowl, USC has two Heisman winners. Texas has Vince Young. Advantage, Texas. Young passes for 267 yards and rushes for 200; his eight-yard touchdown scramble with 19 seconds left gives the Longhorns a 41-38 victory in arguably the greatest of all title games.
2. **1998 Kansas State vs. Texas A&M:** In the Big 12 title game, once-woeful Kansas State nears a perfect season, leading 27-12 in the fourth quarter. But QB Michael Bishop's late fumble spurs a rally, and A&M wins 36-33 in double overtime.
3. **1993 Nebraska vs. Florida State:** In the national-title Orange Bowl, the Huskers miss a long, last-play field goal to lose 18-16 but gain the momentum and confidence to win three national championships in the next four seasons.
4. **1987 Oklahoma vs. Nebraska:** Game of the Century II: OU beats Nebraska 17-7 in a November matchup of the top two ranked teams.
5. **1995 Nebraska vs. Florida:** The Osborne Era's finest hour: 62-24 Fiesta Bowl rout of Florida for national title.
6. **2000 Oklahoma vs. Florida State:** Bob Stoops' reputation is sealed with a 13-2 upset in the national-title Orange Bowl.
7. **1992 Iowa State vs. Nebraska:** The 3-7 Cyclones pull off a 19-10 shocker behind fourth-string QB Marv Seiler.
8. **2001 Oklahoma State vs. Oklahoma:** The 3-7 Cowboys pull off 16-13 shocker to knock Sooners out of possible Rose Bowl.
9. **1997 Texas-UCLA:** Longhorns lose 66-3 at home, then get serious about football.
10. **2003 Oklahoma vs. Texas A&M:** Sooners win 77-0 in a game that wasn't as close as the score indicated.
2. **Roll Left, 1996:** Texas led Nebraska 30-27 late in the Big 12 title game. On fourth-and-inches, UT quarterback James Brown rolled left and threw to Derek Lewis for a 61-yard gain. Nebraska fell, 37-27.
3. **Five downs, 1990:** Colorado had first-and-goal from the Missouri 3-yard line, trailing 31-27 with 30 seconds left. The Buffs finally scored — on a fifth down. They went on to win the national title.
4. **Kicked ball, 1997:** Wingback Shevin Wiggins kicked the ball up on a last-play pass, allowing Matt Davison to grab it for a touchdown and give Nebraska the chance to beat Missouri 45-38 in overtime.
5. **Baylor disaster, 1999:** UNLV's Kevin Thomas returned a fumble 99 yards on the last play of the game to beat Baylor, 27-24.
6. **Superman flies, 2001:** Oklahoma safety Roy Williams leaps a Texas blocker to cause a game-clinching interception of Chris Simms.
7. **Aggie tragedy, 1999:** The logs of Texas A&M's traditional bonfire collapsed, killing 12 current or former students.
8. **Barry Switzer's demise, 1989:** After NCAA probation and five players charged with major felonies, Oklahoma's coaching legend is forced to resign.
9. **A&M-Tech feud, 2001:** Texas Tech students tear down the goal post and start a melee by tossing it into the A&M crowd.
10. **Irish flag, 1990:** Raghib Ismail's 91-yard punt return in the final minute apparently wipes out Colorado's 10-9 lead over Notre Dame, but a clipping penalty returns the national title to CU. ■

UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

1. **The Catch, 1994:** Colorado trailed Michigan 26-21 in the final seconds. From his 36-yard line, CU quarterback Kordell Stewart rolled right and threw a prayer that trumped Doug Flutie. Stewart's pass sailed all the way into the end zone, off the fingertips of split end Blake Anderson and into the waiting hands of flanker Michael Westbrook for a miracle victory and the Play of the Year in all of sport.



Photo by John Williamson

Barry Sanders had 2,628 yards rushing and 39 touchdowns in one season.

**BAYLOR**

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AT A GLANCE

2005

5-6 overall, 2-6 Big 12 (5th, South)

COACH

Guy Morriss — At Baylor: 11-23, 3 years;
overall: 20-37, 5 years

RETURNING STARTERS

14; 8 offense, 4 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WR Dominique Zeigler, WR Trent Shelton,
RB Paul Mosley, RB Brandon Whitaker,
DT M.T. Robinson, CB C.J. Wilson,
CB Anthony Arline

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Covering and catching passes. C.J. Wilson and Anthony Arline are two of the best cover corners in the league, while the receiving corps could be special with the addition of incoming freshman David Gettis.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Seven new starters on defense are filling big shoes, particularly at the end and rover positions. Depth is always a problem on the offensive line. The Bears can't afford injuries, like punter Daniel Sepulveda's torn ACL in April.

KEY LOSSES

WR-KR Shaun Rochon, DE Montez Murphy,
ROV-KR Willie Andrews, LB Colin Allred,
FS Maurice Lane

OVERVIEW

Another point here or there, and the Bears would have gone bowling last year. If the defense doesn't have a big dropoff and the offense improves in the new system, they have a good chance to end a 12-year bowl drought.

Competitive? Check. Bowl Game? It Might be Time

Despite posting the program's most wins in a decade, Baylor coach Guy Morriss couldn't mask his frustration.

"We were disastrous in the red zone," said Morriss, whose team scored just 17 touchdowns in 46 trips inside the opponents' 20-yard line last season. "Just a handful of points here and there would have given us that sixth win and put us in a bowl game."

Instead, the Bears, at 5-6, were once again home for Christmas.

That's why Morriss, entering the fourth year of a rebuilding project, decided to take the offense in a new direction.

When offensive coordinator Brent Pease left at the end of the 2005 season, Morriss replaced him with coordinator Lee Hays and quarterbacks coach Wes Phillips from Division II West Texas A&M.

Disciples of Texas Tech's "Air Raider" attack, Hays and Phillips scrapped most of the team's two-back sets in favor of the Red Raiders' four-wide receiver formations to pump some life into the red zone-deficient Bears.

"If they've got an All-American defensive tackle, and we have a sophomore starting at right guard, it's insanity to think that we're going to run right at that kid," Hays said.

"If you're conventional and they're conventional defensively, then you're saying that your kid's going to win that battle. And you're not putting him in a position to be successful."

It's not as drastic as shucking the wish-

bone in favor of the run-and-shoot. But it's unconventional enough to give the often-overmatched Bears a chance.

"Last year, we could score. But man, we had to labor to get it," said Morriss, who was with current Texas Tech coach Mike Leach when the offense was born under Hal Mumme at Valdosta State in the early 1990s.

There's usually a two- to three-year learning curve with the offense. But Hays saw immediate results at West Texas.

Last year, Hays' Buffaloes led Division II with 363.8 yards passing per game and ranked among the top 10 in scoring (40.3 ppg) and total offense (477.3 ypg).

"The skill guys right now are ahead of where I thought they would be," Hays said. "The offensive line is probably going to take a little more time. We'll be humming when those guys don't have to think as much."

OFFENSE

Even with the offensive switch, two of the Bears' most dangerous weapons are in the backfield.

Running backs Paul Mosley and Brandon Whitaker had a combined 1,138 yards and eight touchdowns last season, adding 42 catches.

"I'll know we're rolling when I sit here and stare at the ceiling, trying to figure out how to get all these guys on the field," Hays said. "And to a certain extent, that's the issue I have with the backs. I love the fact that we've got a 1-2 punch with Mosley and Whitaker."



Paul Mosley Photo by John Williamson



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 109.9 ypg rushing (10th Big 12/89th NCAA), 208.0 ypg passing (7th/76th), 317.9 ypg total offense (12th/57th), 21.5 ppg (11th/81st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Shawn Bell*	Sr.	Career completion percentage of 59.9 ... and getting better.	Blake Szymanski, Fr.
RB	Paul Mosley*	Sr.	Leading rusher (657 yards) could lose job.	Brandon Whitaker, Jr.
WR	Dominique Zeigler*	Sr.	Has 103 receptions in past two years.	Mikhail Baker, So.
WR	Trent Shelton*	Sr.	Reliable receiver helps you move the chains.	David Gettis, Fr.
IR	Terrance Parks	Jr.	Converted quarterback with good hands.	Carl Sims, So.
IR	Trey Payne	So.	Needs to become more consistent.	Queito Teasley, So.
LT	Travis Farst	Sr.	Fifth-year player with four career starts.	Matt Lott, Sr.
LG	Chad Smith	Jr.	Started the final game of last season.	Thad Boatner, Fr.
C	Yancy Boatner*	Sr.	Moved from right guard this spring.	Sam Sledge, Fr.
RG	Will Blaylock*	Sr.	Tulane transfer switches from center.	Dan Gay, So.
RT	Jason Smith*	So.	Starting tight end last year.	Nick Pace, Jr.*

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 161.7 ypg rushing (11th Big 12/74th NCAA), 216.3 ypg passing (6th/57th), 378.0 ypg total offense (10th/63rd), 26.5 ppg (8th/65th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Marcus Foreman*	Sr.	Has 15.5 tackles for loss in past two years.	Jason Lamb, Fr.
DT	Klayton Shoals	Sr.	Iowa State transfer is making an impact.	Vincent Rhodes, So.
DT	M.T. Robinson*	Sr.	Has been slowed by injuries.	Quincy Jenkins, Sr.
DE	Julian Hill	Sr.	It won't be easy replacing Montez Murphy.	Geoff Nelson, Jr.
LB	Nick Moore	Jr.	Baylor's only experienced linebacker.	Joe Pawelek, Fr.
LB	Antonio Jones	Fr.	Untested, but ready to shine.	Ben Hixson, So.
OS	Maurice Linguist	Sr.	Needs to become a playmaker.	Jeremy Williams, Fr.
RV	Brandon Stiggers	Jr.	Back in the program after stop at junior college.	Marlon Price, So.
CB	Anthony Arline*	Sr.	A two-year starter with four career INTs.	James Todd, Sr.
CB	C.J. Wilson*	Sr.	Led Big 12 last season with five interceptions.	Braelon Davis, Jr.
FS	Dwain Crawford	So.	Takes over for team's leading tackler.	Jordan Lake, Fr.

*Returning starter

Wide receivers Dominique Zeigler and Trent Shelton, who had a combined 87 catches for 1,015 yards and six touchdowns, should be one of the best duos in the league. At the inside spots, the options include Trey Payne, Carl Sims, Queito Teasley and converted quarterback Terrance Parks.

"I think across the board, you'll be able to substitute and not drop off a heck of a lot," Morriss said.

For the past four years, all Shawn Bell has heard is that he's too short, his arm's not strong enough and there's always someone better.

But the fifth-year senior was 5-4 as the starting quarterback last season, throwing for 1,964 yards and 12 touchdowns with only six interceptions. In the last two

scrimmages of the spring, he was 42 of 61 for 383 yards and five touchdowns.

"There isn't anybody in the conference right now that I'd want over him," Hays said. "There might be some guys with more physical tools, but Shawn's as accurate and as smart as anybody out there."

The biggest addition to the offensive line was Morriss as the position coach. Besides playing 15 years in the NFL with the Philadelphia Eagles and New England Patriots, Morriss coached the line in stops that included four years of pro ball.

"It's good to get back on the field," said Morriss, who's coaching a position for the first time since becoming a head coach six years ago.

"That's kind of my forte. And I think

it's helped my relationship with the whole team. They see me out here working and not just a walk-around coach anymore."

In the final week of spring training, Morriss swapped two of his starters, putting senior Yancy Boatner at center and senior Will Blaylock at right guard. The rest of the line has junior Chad Smith at left guard, senior Travis Farst at left tackle and sophomore Jason Smith at right tackle.

DEFENSE

Since "you don't know what's going to happen" with a new offense, Morriss is counting on the defense to carry the Bears early in the season.

But defensive coordinator Bill Bradley is like the little boy at the dike, scram-



Tim Atchison, DB

As a senior, Atchison had 147 tackles and six interceptions. His great frame at 6-2, 185 pounds with solid speed should allow him to come in and compete with the current defensive backfield already at Baylor. Atchison was rated as the No. 42 safety in the country and had offers from schools including Georgia Tech, Purdue, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech.



David Gettis, WR

Originally a 2005 signee, Gettis will enter as a freshman in 2006 after getting the nod from the NCAA Clearinghouse. Gettis chose to stay with Baylor and what a choice it will be for the Bears. Rated as a four-star prospect in 2005, the 6-4, 198-pounder should step in right away at receiver for Baylor.



Ernest Smith, WR

After Hurricane Katrina, Smith moved from his New Orleans home to John Tyler High School in Tyler, Texas where he lit it up on the field. Smith has the height, at 6-4, which college coaches are looking for in a big play wide-out. The three-star prospect will get a chance to prove his abilities early.



Greg Carlson, LB

Going into his senior year, the versatile 6-4, 220-pound Carlson moved from defensive end to linebacker which paved the way for a big performance. He was the district co-MVP. Carlson had offers from schools including Duke, Iowa State, Indiana, Missouri, New Mexico, TCU, and UTEP before committing to the Bears in November. His big frame and great speed on defense should make for an exciting career at Baylor. Look for big things from Carlson as he goes into his second and third year in the Big 12.

Commitments	29
Average Stars	2.34
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	10
★★★☆☆	19
Total Stars	68
National Rank: 68	Big 12: 12

2007 NEEDS

A quarterback is the biggest need for the Bears. The Big 12 program will look for one pure passer to lead the way for the group with an outside chance at two. Baylor will also try to sure up depth on both the offensive and defensive lines.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ATCHISON, Tim	DB	6-2, 185	★★★	Copperas Cove, TX	Copperas Cove
Rivals.com's No. 42 safety. ... No. 90 recruit in Texas. ... First-team All-State. ... Had six interceptions and three blocked kicks as a senior.					
BEATTY, Tyler	QB	6-3, 187	★★	Pflugerville, TX	Pflugerville
Threw for 1,688 yards and 14 touchdowns in only season as starter. ... Rushed for 133 yards and two touchdowns.					
BRYAN, Antareis	DB	6-0, 165	★★	Dallas	Carter
Helped team to district title. ... Intercepted three passes as a senior.					
BUFORD, Chris	DE	6-4, 255	★★	Arlington, TX	Bowie
Had 50 tackles and 12 sacks in five games as a senior. ... Also played tight end.					
CARLSON, Greg	LB	6-4, 220	★★	Spring, TX	Klein Oak
Had 165 tackles as a senior. ... Started at defensive tackle as a junior.					
CRISS, Dominique	DB	5-10, 173	★★★	Arlington, TX	Bowie
Rivals.com's No. 60 cornerback. ... Had 70 tackles, eight pass break-ups as a senior. ... Also played running back.					
FENTY, Justin	WR	5-10, 160	★★	Denton, TX	Ryan
Three-year starter. ... Caught 60 passes for 866 yards and 10 touchdowns as a senior.					
FINLEY, Jay	RB	5-11, 190	★★★	Corsicana, TX	Corsicana
Rivals.com's No. 49 overall running back. ... Rushed for 2,148 yards and 18 touchdowns in two seasons.					
GETTIS, David	WR	6-4, 200	★★★	Los Angeles	Dorsey
Signed with Baylor in 2004. ... Will also run track for Baylor. ... Participated in spring drills.					
HAGENS, Dylan	OL	6-7, 260	★★	Shiner, TX	Shiner
Second team All-State. ... Played offensive guard, defensive end and defensive tackle.					
HARDEMAN, Jameon	DE	6-1, 240	★★	Dallas	Kimball
Originally signed with Arizona State in 2005. ... Participated in Baylor spring practice. ... Had six sacks and 70 tackles as a senior.					
HICKS, James	WR	6-2, 175	★★★	Waco, TX	Midway
Caught 77 passes for 1,306 yards and 14 touchdowns as a senior. ... District co-offensive MVP. ... Scored 28 goals for the soccer team in 2005.					
JAMES, Roman	DB	6-1, 180	★★	Sharon, MA	Sharon
Partial qualifier in 2004. ... Did not enroll until 2005. ... Son of former New England Patriots safety Ronald James.					
JOHNSON, Adrian	DT	6-2, 175	★★★	Tyler, TX	Tyler
Rivals.com's No. 59 defensive tackle. ... Expected to play offensive line for Baylor. ... First-team All-State offensive guard.					
KING, Randy	DE	6-4, 245	★★	Alice, TX	Alice
Late addition to Baylor's class, signing on Feb. 26. ... First-team All-District.					
MICHEL, Jeremy	OL	6-5, 280	★★	Bradenton, FL	Manatee
Helped school to first regional title since 1994. ... Also played long snapper. ... Blocked for area's leading rusher.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
MITCHELL, Chris	LB	6-2, 240	★★	Lancaster, TX	Lancaster
Was a defensive lineman and tight end at Lancaster but will move to linebacker. ... Had 112 tackles and seven sacks.					
NORICE, Anthony	QB	6-0, 172	★★	Dallas	Skyline
Second team All-District. ... Completed 61 of 135 passes with 1,311 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior.					
PIERCE, Andre	RB	5-8, 176	★★	Mesquite, TX	Rowlett
Second-leading rusher in Metroplex with 2,301 yards and 24 touchdowns. ... First-team All-State.					
PRINCE, Reid	OL	6-4, 255	★★★	Dallas	Highland Park
Highland Park's 15-0 state title team averaged more than 490 yards per game. ... Allowed one sack in last two seasons.					
RANDLE, Ben	WR	6-5, 200	★★	Plano, TX	West
Caught 29 passes for 732 yards and 10 touchdowns. ... Father Ervin Randle was a two-time All-Southwest Conference selection for Baylor.					
REDFEARN, Connor	DT	6-2, 280	★★	Santa Monica, CA	Santa Monica
Started eight games at defensive tackle in only junior college season. ... Spent 2003-04 as walk-on at Ole Miss, but did not play.					
RUBLES, Calvin	DB	6-3, 185	★★	Richardson, TX	Berkner
Had six interceptions and 44 tackles as a senior. ... First-team All-District. ... Also played basketball and track.					
SANDERS, Jeremy	ATH	6-2, 190	★★★	Marlin, TX	Marlin
Three-year starter. ... Threw for 2,530 yards and 27 touchdowns with only one interception as a senior. ... Also rushed for 882 yards and 16 touchdowns. ... All-State honorable mention.					
SMITH, Ernest	WR	6-4, 200	★★★	Tyler, TX	Tyler
Rivals.com's No. 40 wide receiver. ... No. 48 recruit in Texas. ... Moved to Tyler from New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.					
STIGGERS, Brandon	DB	6-0, 190	★★★	Compton, CA	Compton CC
Walked on to Baylor in 2004-05 before going to Compton CC. ... Had 121 tackles and three interceptions last season.					
TAYLOR, Brad	QB	6-3, 205	★★	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville
Three-year starter. ... Threw for 1,010 yards and nine touchdowns in an option offense. ... Rushed for 661 yards and eight touchdowns.					
TOLBERT, Paul	LB	6-1, 230	★★	Decatur, MS	East Central CC
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Had 76 tackles in seven games. ... Three-year starter at Clinch County (Ga.).					
WARD, Jwaun	DB	6-1, 208	★★	Perkinston, MS	Miss. Gulf Coast CC
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Helped Mississippi Gulf Coast to first playoff appearance since 1984. ... Played for Tennessee-Chattanooga in 2003.					

BEARS SPRING ROSTER

NOTEBOOK

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
80	JORDAN ADAMS	TE	6-4	248	Jr	Arlington	89	LEQUANTUM McDONALD	DE	6-3	281	Fr	Waco
82	JUSTIN AKERS	TE	6-5	236	Fr	Deer Park	22	MARCUS MEAD	LB	6-2	220	So	Alva, OK
20	CALEB ALLEN	PK	6-0	175	So	Arlington	81	MIKE MILLER	TE	6-3	243	Jr	Lake Charles, LA
6	ANTHONY ARLINE	CB	6-2	194	Sr	San Antonio	44	NICK MOORE	LB	6-1	227	Jr	Arlington
83	MIKAIL BAKER	WR	6-0	191	So	Dallas	17	PAUL MOSLEY	RB	6-3	235	Sr	Austin
60	JUSTIN BANNISTER	LB	6-2	248	Fr	Austin	39	CRAIG MUNN	WR	6-0	189	Sr	Waco
14	BRYAN BAYS	OS	5-9	182	Sr	Dallas	52	NICK MYATT	DS	6-2	204	Sr	Waco
2	JOSH BELL	CB	6-0	165	Jr	Dallas	57	GEOFF NELSON	DE	6-2	252	Jr	Cedar Hill
11	SHAWN BELL	QB	6-1	219	Sr	China Spring	17	LATIF NURUDEEN	CB	6-1	191	So	Friendswood
6	JOE BENNETT	WR	5-7	167	So	Arlington	19	CHUDI OGADI	OS	5-10	198	Jr	Houston
3	BROOK BLACK	P	6-2	179	So	Houston	7	CURTIS OKPARA	CB	6-0	178	So	Missouri City
50	WILL BLAYLOCK	C	6-2	308	Sr	Tyler	25	JUSTIN OSINDE	DE	6-3	267	So	Arlington
74	THAD BOATNER	OG	6-7	273	Fr	Hamilton	68	NICK PACE	OT	6-3	289	Jr	Katy
76	YANCY BOATNER	OG	6-4	327	Sr	Hamilton	5	TERRANCE PARKS	TE	6-4	243	Jr	Lufkin
97	TREY BRYANT	DT	6-3	318	Fr	Richardson	46	JOE PAWELEK	LB	6-2	225	Fr	Spring Branch
59	COOPER CALHOUN	DE	6-2	255	Fr	Garland	9	TREY PAYNE	WR	5-9	182	So	La Marque
85	RYAN CAMPBELL	WR	6-3	185	Fr	Fort Worth	19	CLAY PETERSON	QB	5-10	180	So	Lincoln, NE
58	CHRIS CAREY	DE	6-3	253	Fr	New Braunfels	33	JON PIORKOWSKI	OS	6-3	219	So	Lake St. Louis, MO
1	DWAIN CRAWFORD	FS	6-0	202	So	Giddings	28	MARIO PRICE	RB	5-10	200	Sr	Fort Worth
10	MICHAEL CUBA	Rov	6-2	199	Jr	Taylor	11	MARLON PRICE	Rov	6-2	180	So	Dallas
8	CHANDLER DANE	QB	6-0	206	Fr	Dallas	26	JASON REALUX	FS	6-3	227	Jr	Thrall
47	DAMON DOTSON	FB	5-9	211	Sr	Houston	92	CONNOR REDFEARN	DT	6-2	290	Jr	Mt. Pleasant
48	TRAVIS EATON	LB	6-2	193	Sr	New Braunfels	51	VINCENT RHODES	DT	6-2	310	So	Denison
13	NATE FARLEY	FS	6-2	193	So	Denison	12	GREG RICHARDSON	QB	6-3	230	So	Fairview
67	TRAVIS FARST	OT	6-7	327	Sr	Cedar Park	45	CLAY RITCHEY	TE	6-2	223	So	San Antonio
52	TY FINDLEY	LB	6-0	218	So	Marshall	16	RYAN ROBERTS	QB	6-0	205	Fr	Keller
54	COREY FORD	DT	6-3	304	Sr	Dallas	99	M.T. ROBINSON	DT	6-1	305	Sr	Newport News, VA
90	MARCUS FOREMAN	DE	6-2	248	Sr	Hewitt	27	RALPH RODRIGUEZ	S	5-10	193	Jr	Fort Stockton
71	DAN GAY	OG	6-5	314	So	Lafayette, LA	37	DANIEL SEPULVEDA	P	6-3	227	Sr	Dallas
51	ADAM GEIB	DE	6-5	243	So	Waco	50	SAM SHALALA	LB	6-1	218	So	Sugar Land
84	DAVID GETTIS	WR	6-4	198	Fr	Los Angeles, CA	1	TRENT SHELTON	WR	6-2	207	Sr	Fort Worth
28	COREY GINDRATT	Rov	6-0	173	Fr	Amarillo	96	KLAYTON SHOALS	DT	6-3	281	Sr	Texarkana
23	JUSTIN GREEN	CB	5-8	157	Fr	Converse	24	CARL SIMS	WR	5-10	168	So	Waco
88	CHRIS GRIESENBECK	TE	6-3	250	Fr	San Antonio	56	MICHAEL SLAUGHTER	DE	6-6	253	Jr	Lompoc, CA
49	JAMEON HARDEMAN	DE	6-1	248	Fr	Dallas	60	SAM SLEDGE	C	6-2	266	Fr	Midland
69	RICKY HASOON	C	6-2	280	Jr	Katy	70	CHAD SMITH	OG	6-6	299	Jr	Allen
43	RYAN HAVENS	PK	5-10	197	Sr	Odessa	32	CORDNEY SMITH	RB	6-0	225	Fr	Duncanville
29	ANDREW HEARD	WR	5-11	184	Sr	Cuero	72	JASON SMITH	OT	6-5	287	So	Dallas
75	JORDAN HEARVEY	OT	6-4	300	Fr	Richardson	24	AVERY SNEED	CB	5-9	155	Sr	El Paso
93	JULIAN HILL	DE	6-3	254	Sr	Katy	9	BRANDON STIGGERS	Rov	6-0	188	Jr	Houston
35	BEN HIXSON	LB	6-2	236	So	Southlake	41	DARY STONE	PK	6-0	160	Fr	Dallas
31	BENNETT HOEFER	FS	5-10	173	Jr	Woodway	71	COURTNEY SWIFT	DT	6-2	259	Fr	Richardson
78	ANDERSON HORN	DT	6-5	268	Sr	Deer Park	14	BLAKE SZYMANSKI	QB	6-4	198	Fr	Wichita Falls
55	PAUL HOWARD	LB	6-2	250	Sr	Denison	73	TED TANNER	OT	6-3	280	Jr	Waco
30	ROMAN JAMES	FS	6-1	174	Fr	Sharon, MA	95	DAMIAN TAYLOR	DE	6-3	271	Fr	Waco
23	DESMOND JENKINS	FS	5-10	198	So	Trinidad	26	QUEITO TEASLEY	WR	6-1	175	So	Katy
98	QUINCY JENKINS	DT	6-1	286	Sr	Trinidad	84	JOSHUA THOMPSON	TE	6-1	245	Jr	Dallas
8	ANTONIO JONES	LB	6-3	229	Fr	Dallas	36	JAMES TODD	CB	6-0	184	Sr	Marshall
25	JACOBY JONES	RB	5-11	219	So	Bangs	16	PAUL TOLBERT	LB	6-1	220	Jr	Decatur, MS
42	ZACH JONES	OS	5-11	204	Jr	Plufgerville	40	KEEGAN VANN	FB	6-0	242	Jr	Katy
21	JORDAN LAKE	FS	6-2	203	Fr	Houston	75	RAYLON WALTERS	DE	6-5	221	Fr	Houston
12	JAKE LAMAR	Rov	6-0	187	So	Bedford	62	JONATHAN WEEKS	DS	5-10	256	Jr	Glendale, AZ
87	JASON LAMB	TE	6-6	252	Fr	Richardson	2	BRANDON WHITAKER	RB	5-10	192	Jr	Edmond, OK
15	MAURICE LINGUIST	OS	5-10	207	Sr	Mesquite	10	THOMAS WHITE	WR	6-2	204	So	Plano
47	DANIEL LOPEZ	LB	5-11	221	Jr	Brownsville	20	ALTON WIDEMON	CB	5-11	174	Jr	Lindale
61	MATT LOTT	OT	6-5	318	Sr	Wiggins, MS	4	JEREMY WILLIAMS	OS	5-10	206	Fr	Dallas
10	JASON LOVVORN	QB	5-11	174	So	Dallas	3	C.J. WILSON	CB	6-1	195	Sr	Terrell
							7	DOMINIQUE ZEIGLER	WR	6-3	180	Sr	Killeen

For a guy who can run a quarter-mile in less than 46 seconds, a year is like a lifetime.

Freshman wide receiver **David Gettis** from Los Angeles originally signed with the Bears in February 2005. But he was not cleared academically by the NCAA Clearinghouse until April 2006.

"It was devastating being in the house, knowing that I should be playing football or running track," said Gettis, a three-time California state champion in the 400 meters who ran a national-best 45.84 seconds in 2005.

So, when he got the news that he was eligible for 2006?

"I don't know how to do a back flip, but I did one mentally," he said.

• Coaching might not be genetic, but it certainly seems to run through the Phillips family's bloodlines.

Quarterbacks coach **Wes Phillips** is the son of San Diego Chargers defensive coordinator **Wade Phillips** and grandson of former Houston Oilers and New Orleans Saints head coach **Bum Phillips**.

"It's not so much a pressure to live up to them," said the 27-year-old Phillips. "I just don't want to be the guy that brings the name down."

• With five interceptions and one fumble recovery last season, cornerback **C.J. Wilson** topped the team's 2004 total for interceptions and was just three shy of the Bears' national-low nine turnovers gained. Baylor went from dead last to tied for 14th nationally with 16 interceptions and 29 total turnovers last season.

• In addition to Phillips and offensive coordinator **Lee Hays**, who both came from Division II West Texas A&M, head coach **Guy Morriss** hired linebackers coach **Gary Joe Kinne** from Canton High School.

A former All-Southwest Conference linebacker at Baylor (1986-89), Kinne was 28-8 in three years at the East Texas high school and led the Eagles to the Class 3A state quarterfinals last season.

Kinne made national headlines in April 2005, when he was shot by an angry parent at the high school fieldhouse. He lost 80 percent of his liver and dropped 95 pounds off his 280-pound frame, but Kinne had a remarkable recovery and returned in time for Canton's first two-a-day workouts in August.

(5-5, 2-6)

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Bell	10	119.55	320	190	6	59.4	1964	12	55	196.4
Parks	8	71.15	71	32	6	45.1	324	1	49	40.5

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Mosley	11	180	679	22	657	3.7	7	57	59.7
Whitaker	11	101	516	35	481	4.8	1	44	43.7
Jones	2	12	57	0	57	4.8	0	17	28.5

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Zeigler	11	48	563	11.7	5	55	51.2
Rochon	11	44	443	10.1	2	36	40.3
Shelton	11	39	452	11.6	1	51	41.1

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Lane 84, Allred 73, Harper 73
Interceptions: Wilson 5, Arline 3, Widemon 2
Sacks: Allred 5.5, Murphy 3.5, Robinson 3
Tackles for loss: Murphy 9.5, Allred 9, Andrews 7.5, Foreman 7.5

Results

W	at SMU	28-23
W	Samford	48-14
W	at Army	20-10
L	at Texas A&M	OT 13-16
W	at Iowa State	23-13
L	Nebraska	14-23
L	at Oklahoma	2 OT 30-37
L	Texas Tech	0-28
L	Texas	0-62
L	at Missouri	16-31
W	Oklahoma State	44-34



MARCUS FOREMAN

M.T. Robinson and Klayton Shoals, and ends Marcus Foreman and Julian Hill, is solid enough, Bradley said. "But any of those guys' flashes haven't been close to Montez Murphy."

Equally tough to replace is Andrews, who owned the rover position for the past three years. He had 59 tackles last season with 7.5 stops behind the line, four quarterback hurries and three pass breakups.

Brandon Stiggers won a spring battle for the spot, but Bradley might also look at junior college transfer Jwaun Ward from Mississippi.

In the middle, junior Nick Moore and redshirt freshman Antonio Jones are replacing senior starters at linebacker.

The strength of the defense is the secondary, especially if junior cornerback Braelon Davis comes back from academic probation. That will give Bradley the freedom to rotate senior cornerback C.J. Wilson, who had 45 tackles and a league-best five interceptions, to free safety or rover.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The biggest casualty was losing special teams coach Mark Nelson to Tulsa.

Over the past three seasons, no other area on the team has been anywhere near as strong as the special teams. Departed Shaun Rochon and Willie Andrews both earned All-Big 12 honors as kick returners, while punter Daniel Sepulveda was the 2004 Ray Guy Award winner and ranked third in the nation last year with a 46.2-yard average.

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

CB C.J. Wilson

Not since Gary Baxter (now with the Cleveland Browns) have the Bears had a cornerback with the swagger and confidence of Wilson. ... He tied for the Big 12 lead and ninth nationally with five interceptions, adding five pass breakups, a fumble recovery and 45 tackles. ... At 6-1, 195 pounds, he has the size and versatility to move to free safety or rover, if needed.



EMERGING STAR

RB Brandon Whitaker

The new offense seems to be tailor-made for Whitaker, a dart-and-cut runner with great hands. ... Splitting time with Paul Mosley at tailback last year, he rushed for 481 yards on just 101 carries (4.8-yard average) and was the fourth-leading receiver with 30 catches for 160 yards. ... Depending on need, he could add kick-return duties this year.



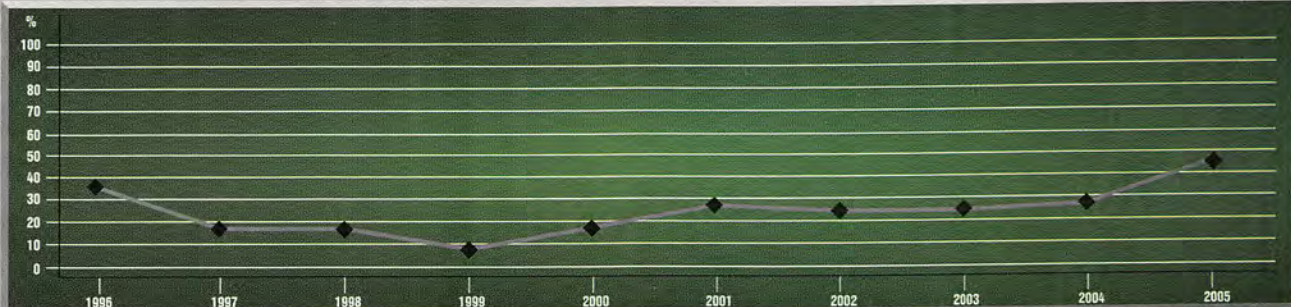
TOP NEWCOMER

WR David Gettis

Good things come to those who wait. After sitting out last year, Gettis was finally cleared academically by the NCAA Clearinghouse in the spring. ... An all-city pick from Los Angeles Dorsey High School, the 6-4, 200-pound receiver had 31 catches for 600 yards and nine touchdowns in 2004. ... His best work has come on the track, where Gettis won three consecutive California state titles in the 400 meters and posted a national-best time of 45.84 seconds.



Baylor's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

SHAWN BELL



one of the intangibles that Bell brings to the offense. As the son of a football coach, his knowledge of the game is unbelievably high.

"He's like a little coach. He's mini-me," Hays said.

Bell was 5-4 as a starter last year, losing two road games in overtime. And in a loss at Missouri, he came off the bench to throw for 206 yards and two touchdowns in the last 18 minutes, nearly sparking a miraculous comeback.

Bell, who holds the school record for career completion percentage (59.9), was 190 of 320 for 1,964 yards, with 12 touchdowns with six interceptions last season.

But more than ever, the offense seems to fit him like a glove.

"It's not about the big arm," said Bell, who threw for 8,437 yards while playing for his dad at China Spring High School.

"We're not going to five-step drop and throw it 70 yards down the field. It's going to be pinpoint accuracy and good reads, and hopefully that will play to my strengths."

The knock on Bell, somewhat unjustly, has been his lack of arm strength. But head coach Guy Morriss said he's a master at taking "what they give you."

"The thing about Shawn is he's got a good feel for when to go down and when to drop it off and find the outlet when he needs to," Morriss said. "And you have to have that in this offense, because you're not going to hit the big play every time."

For the first time in his career, Bell is not having to constantly peek over his shoulder. Redshirt freshman Blake Szymanski or incoming freshman Tyler Beatty might be the future, but Bell is the clear-cut No. 1 going into his senior season.

"I just think that the confidence that the new coaches have in me makes me so much of a better quarterback," Bell said.

Knack For Game QB's Best Asset

Before new offensive coordinator Lee Hays even had a chance to get comfortable in his new chair, he got a visit from quarterback Shawn Bell.

"He showed up the day I got the job and wanted the playbook, wanted the cut-ups," Hays said of the 6-1, 218-pound senior from China Spring, which is a stone's throw from Baylor's campus in Waco.

"Christmas Day, he calls and asks me about a read."

The disciplined, cerebral side is

Sepulveda suffered a torn ACL in his (non-kicking) right knee in the spring while playing pick-up basketball, and is expected back by October, possibly earlier.

Ryan Havens was 16 of 23 on field goal attempts, with a long of 49.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Early momentum is key for the Bears, who play four of their first five games at home.

After a 3-0 start last year against SMU, I-AA Samford and Army, Baylor opens 2006 against defending Mountain West Conference champion TCU.

"I think the first one will be key. No doubt," said Morriss, who is facing his alma mater for the first time as a head coach. "I won't say we've circled it, but that's definitely the one we're pointing toward."

Baylor will face six 2005 bowl teams, including national champion Texas. But the Bears play host to Texas A&M and Oklahoma at Floyd Casey Stadium after losing overtime games on the road in 2005.

— Jerry Hill

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 TCU

Sept. 9 NORTHWESTERN STATE

Sept. 16 at Washington State

Sept. 23 ARMY

Sept. 30 KANSAS STATE

Oct. 7 at Colorado

Oct. 14 at Texas

Oct. 21 KANSAS

Oct. 28 TEXAS A&M

Nov. 4 at Texas Tech

Nov. 11 at Oklahoma State

Nov. 18 OKLAHOMA



NORTH TEXAS

MEAN GREEN

AT A GLANCE

2005

2-9 overall, 2-5 Sun Belt (7th)

COACH

Darrell Dickey — At North Texas and overall: 39-35; 8 years

RETURNING STARTERS

17; 9 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB Jamario Thomas, WR Johnny Quinn, QB Daniel Meager, QB Matt Phillips, LB Maurice Holman, S Aaron Weathers

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

North Texas should be at the top of the league in rushing with a healthy Jamario Thomas in the backfield. The offensive line returns four starters, with the only newcomer being redshirt freshman center Chad Rose. The linebackers are the strength of the defense, and the defensive line is much improved.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Quarterback play was subpar a year ago; was it inexperience or just a lack of ability? The secondary also lost all-league defenders in T.J. Covington and Ja'Mel Branch. The talent is there, but it is inexperienced.

KEY LOSSES

RB Patrick Cobbs, DB Ja'Mel Branch, DB T.J. Covington, DL Chris Miller

OVERVIEW

The Mean Green slipped badly after winning the previous four Sun Belt Conference championships. But North Texas wasn't exactly overmatched in conference play, with its five league losses coming by a combined 21 points. With 17 starters returning, the Mean Green has an excellent chance of turning close losses into wins ... and being a factor in the Sun Belt race.

Enough Talent in Place to Be Sun Belt Factor OFFENSE

The Mean Green returns nine starters on offense, but the key is going to be its play at quarterback.

Daniel Meager started all 11 games last year as a redshirt freshman, but the passing game struggled and allowed opponents to focus on the run. Sophomore Matt Phillips looked solid during the spring and could certainly earn the starting job this fall.

North Texas should be much better up front, which will be a delight to junior tailback Jamario Thomas, who led the nation in rushing as a freshman two years ago. He gained just 361 yards last year, but he was hampered by a hamstring injury as well as playing behind senior Patrick Cobbs.

The top four receivers are back, led by Johnny Quinn who caught a team-high 59 passes for 591 yards and five touchdowns last season. The senior is also the best punt returner in the conference and will handle kickoff duties with Zach Muzzy.

Junior Brandon Jackson (22 receptions), senior Muzzy (9) and senior Joel Nwigwe (11) don't have staggering numbers, but they help form arguably the best receiving corps in the Sun Belt.

The offensive line returns intact, with the exception of center, where redshirt freshman Chad Rose will start.

DEFENSE

Defense was a staple for the Mean Green when it won four straight Sun Belt titles, but it took a huge step backward last season, allowing 31.5 points per game.

The Mean Green returns seven starters on that side of the ball and tinkered with

a 3-4 scheme during spring drills with the hope of better using its personnel.

The line should be much improved because Sky Pruitt and Montey Stevenson gained valuable experience last season. Junior Jeremiah Chapman returns after starting all 11 games last season.

North Texas' strength on defense should be at linebacker where all-conference players Phillip Graves and Maurice Holman return. Brandon Monroe had 67 tackles as a freshman, while Shawn Early, who missed last season with a knee injury, will be a major contributor.

The biggest concern is that all-league corners Ja'Mel Branch and T.J. Covington are gone. Senior Tyrone Carter will start at one corner, while sophomore Dominique Green probably will start at the other spot. Redshirt freshmen Antoine Bush, Desmond Chatman and Korey Washington are making a bid for playing time.

Aaron Weathers, who was the Sun Belt Newcomer of the Year last season, is one of the top safeties in the league. He led North Texas with 113 tackles and three interceptions.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Mean Green must replace kicker Nick Bazaldua, who graduated as the program's all-time leading scorer (247 points).

Senior Denis Hopovac, who was Bazaldua's backup, is the projected starter going into the season, while sophomore Kelly Conway is the backup.

Sophomore Truman Spencer, who averaged more than 37 yards per punt last year, is back.

— Monte Hale



BUFFALOES

For more coverage of the Buffaloes, visit www.colorado.rivals.com

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AT A GLANCE

2005

7-6 overall, 5-3 Big 12 (1st, North)

COACH

Dan Hawkins — At Colorado: first year; overall in I-A: 53-10, 5 years

RETURNING STARTERS

12; 5 offense, 6 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Bernard Jackson, LB Thaddeaus Washington, TB Hugh Charles, QB Brian White, OL Mark Fenton, DE Maurice Lucas, CB Terrence Wheatley, FS J.J. Billingsley

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

There is a lot of experience on defense with six returning starters and nine other players who have started at least two games. There are five starting-caliber line backers vying for three jobs. Speedy RB Hugh Charles should excel in Hawkins' offense.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Both lines are short on quality depth, so injuries could create a major headache. The Buffs have been spoiled with a three-year starter at quarterback. Whoever wins the job in fall camp is bound to suffer some growing pains.

KEY LOSSES

QB Joel Klatt, TE Joe Klopfenstein, FB Lawrence Vickers, LB Brian Iwuh, DT James Garee, CB Gerett Burl

OVERVIEW

This team needs a leader and playmaker to emerge at the quarterback position. The Buffs struggled in their new offense in spring ball and must make big strides in August to get off to a fast start. The defense might have to carry the load, which could be asking a lot against a typically tough non-conference schedule.

Hawkins' Transition Appears Smooth — Minus a QB

The turmoil of the Gary Barnett era finally seems to be in the rearview mirror with Dan Hawkins taking over in Boulder after five successful years at Boise State.

He inherits a team that lost its final three regular-season games by a combined score of 130-22, but rebounded to battle Clemson in the Champs Sports Bowl, falling 19-10. The transition between coaching staffs was surprisingly smooth, with no players deciding to transfer as of mid-May.

The Buffs return a solid mix of experience on defense, but must find a way to quickly improve offensively. Fortunately, Hawkins is known for producing bold offenses with aggressive game plans. He also will have the best place-kicker in the country at his disposal.

The bigger question is whether he has the personnel in Boulder to fit his offensive scheme. It's a mix of the one-back approach he used at Boise State and the pass-happy approach employed at Arizona State, where offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich coached before coming to Boulder.

It also employs some elements of the offense used at Cal, where passing game coordinator and receivers coach Eric Kiesau coached for four seasons.

The Buffs made their mark under Barnett with a solid running game and short passes in the West Coast offense. Hawkins insists the team will maintain its running persona while simultaneously taking more shots down the field with

a more wide-open passing attack.

There is no reason to doubt Hawkins means what he says. His offenses at Boise State were much more balanced than they were given credit.

OFFENSE

The first order of business is finding a quarterback. Three-year starter Joel Klatt graduated, leaving behind a six-man race to replace him.

It's a question that wasn't settled after spring ball.

Juniors Bernard Jackson and Brian White — neither of whom has started a college game — shared the majority of the snaps, but senior James Cox will be in the mix in the fall after missing most of spring with a hand injury.

Jackson is the most dynamic option with the ability to run and throw, but he has a lot of work to do reading defenses. Still, his mobility is what the coaches like to see.

White has the strongest arm and is probably the favorite to start, but just barely. He saw some time in the bowl loss to Clemson, but didn't help himself much in the spring game, going 10 of 24 for 102 yards and being sacked four times.

Cox is a similar player to Joel Klatt, the starter the past three seasons. In limited time the past two seasons, Cox has completed 41 of 78 passes.

True freshman Cody Hawkins, the coach's son and one of the premier quarterback prospects in the West, surprising-



Dusty Sprague Photo by John Williamson



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 110.3 ypg rushing (9th Big 12/97th NCAA), 222.8 ypg passing (6th/59th), 333.1 ypg total offense (8th/87th), 23.5 ppg (9th/78th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Bernard Jackson	Jr.	No clear-cut favorite; Jackson is explosive athlete.	B. White, Jr./James Cox, Sr.
RB	Hugh Charles*	Jr.	On pace for 1,000 yards in 2005 before injuries hit OL.	B. Ellis, Jr./M. Holliday, Sr.
FB	Samson Jagoras	Jr.	FB has less emphasis after switch to one-back offense.	Jake Behrens, Fr.
WR	Patrick Williams	So.	Must avoid drops and live up to potential.	Blake Mackey, Sr.
WR	Dusty Sprague*	Jr.	Won't scare anyone with his speed.	Stephone Robinson, Jr.
TE	Paul Creighton	Sr.	One of three players who could emerge here.	Tyson DeVree, Jr.
LT	Edwin Harrison*	Jr.	Finally back at tackle after a season at guard.	Devin Head, Fr.
LG	Brian Daniels*	Sr.	A four-year starter and all-conference caliber player.	Bryce MacMartin, Sr.
C	Mark Fenton*	Sr.	A finalist for the Rimington Trophy in 2005.	Zach Jones, Fr.
RG	Daniel Sanders	So.	Young, but is a solid run blocker.	Jack Tipton, Sr.
RT	Tyler Polumbus	Jr.	Missed entire spring after shoulder surgery.	Paul Backowski, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 100.2 ypg rushing (3rd Big 12/11th NCAA), 248.9 passing (11th/87th), 349.2 total offense (7th/41st), 23.6 ppg (7th/45th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Maurice Lucas*	So.	Has a pro body and the desire to reach his potential.	A. Ligon, Sr./W. Boye-Doe, Sr.
DT	George Hypolite	So.	Fed to the wolves last year as a freshman.	Taj Kaynor, Fr.
DT	Brandon Nicholas	So.	A Notre Dame transfer with something to prove.	Marcus Jones, Sr.
DE	Abraham Wright	Sr.	Speed rusher must be more physical against the run.	Alonzo Barrett, Jr.
LB	Thaddeus Washington*	Sr.	A Butkus Award candidate.	R.J. Brown, So.
LB	Jordon Dizon*	Jr.	A run stopper and playmaker in his first two seasons.	Marcus Burton, So.
LB	Brad Jones	So.	Must fill the big shoes of Brian Iwuh.	Joe Sanders, Jr.
CB	Terrence Wheatley	Jr.	Returning from injury that kept him out last season.	Terry Washington, Sr.
CB	Gardner McKay	So.	A greenhorn with all the tools to become a star.	Ben Burney, So.
SS	Ryan Walters	So.	Delivers punishing big hits.	Tyrone Henderson, Sr.*
FS	J.J. Billingsley*	Sr.	Always seems to be around the ball.	Lorenzo Sims, Sr.*

*Returning starter

ly decided to enroll this fall instead of grayshirting. He's only 5-11, but can't be counted out.

Finding a quarterback is only the first step. The Buffs need at least one playmaker to emerge at wide receiver, where the team lacks speed.

Dusty Sprague, Patrick Williams and Stephone Robinson were the best in spring. Blake Mackey must return to form after a torn ACL.

Hawkins is excited about being able to game plan using Hugh Charles' speed out of the backfield. Charles rushed for 858 yards, averaging 4.5 per carry last season, and should get more help this season from the offensive line.

Four other running backs figure to have a shot to play. Junior Byron Ellis

spelled Charles last year. Transfers Mell Holliday and Thomas Perez both bring more power.

The wild card is true freshman Demetrius Sumler, the all-time leading high school ground gainer in the San Diego area.

CU has produced four NFL draft picks at tight end in the past 11 years. A gaggle of players will vie for playing time, including Tyson Devree, a transfer from Western Michigan, seniors Paul Creighton and Dan Goettsch and red-shirt freshman Riar Geer.

The line is led by Rimington Trophy candidate Mark Fenton at center. It could be a strong unit if tackle Tyler Polumbus and guard Jack Tipton recover from injuries.

DEFENSE

The Buffs return seven starters and 16 players with starting experience in a similar defense to what they played last season under different coaches.

The biggest addition is probably secondary coach Greg Brown, who returns to Colorado after a dozen years in the NFL. Brown coached two players to the Jim Thorpe Award and a handful of players to NFL careers in the early 1990s at CU.

This team has a wealth of talent and experience returning in the secondary, but it's the same group that finished 11th in the Big 12 and 87th nationally against the pass in 2005.

Senior safety J.J. Billingsley is a proven playmaker, and cornerback Terrence



Jason Brace, DE

Brace is a player that would have likely not ended up in Boulder had it not been for Dan Hawkins. CU was on his list early, but other teams like Oregon, UCLA, and Oregon State were the teams to beat. Then Hawkins ended up at CU and after a January 13 official visit, Brace decided to become a Buff. Brace is a big physical defensive end that has a great frame to build on. He's known as one of the top run stoppers in the Northwest.



Steven Fendry, TE

Played for one of the top programs in the state of Colorado, helping his team go deep in the playoffs as a senior. Fendry has big, long arms and is able to catch the ball well in traffic with his 6-6, 232-pound frame.



Cody Hawkins, QB

Yes, Hawkins is Dan Hawkins' son, and no he didn't get a scholarship just because of that. Hawkins, even though he is only 5-11 and 175 pounds, is a talented signal-caller that was heavily courted by Oregon and Boise State before he decided to follow his father to CU. Hawkins' best attribute is that he's a winner and a great leader under center.

THE SLEEPER



Jaslee Rouson, RB

Rouson is heading from New Jersey all the way to the Rocky Mountains to play football for the Buffs. The two-star running back emerged onto the scene as a talented running back that racked up some solid offers before picking the Buffs. His father was a student at Colorado.

Commitments	22
Average Stars	2.64
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	14
★★☆☆☆	8
Total Stars	58
National Rank: 48	Big 12: 10

2007 NEEDS

Hawkins was known for his physical play at Boise State and look for him to beef up the defense with aggressive and strong linebackers in 2007. More help at defensive back is also needed, and the Buffs would love to add another playmaker or two at receiver.

NAME	POS.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
BEATTY, B.J.	DE	6-2, 201	★★★	Kahuku, HI	Kahuku
Rivals.com's No. 46 weakside defensive end. ... No. 5 recruit in Hawaii. ... Oahu Player of the Year as a senior. ... Had 50 career sacks including 17 as a senior.					
BORDERS, Quintin	OL	6-5, 290	★★	Lexington, KY	Bryan Station
All-City defensive end as a junior before putting on 50 pounds.					
BOYER, Bill	OL	6-5, 290	★★	Lakewood, CO	Green Mountain
Started at offensive and defensive tackle as a senior. ... Added 36 tackles on defense.					
BRACE, Jason	DE	6-5, 250	★★★	Spanaway, WA	Spanaway Lake
Rivals.com's No. 50 strongside defensive end. ... No. 10 recruit in Washington. ... Had 47 tackles, including 14 for a loss, as a senior. ... Had seven sacks in 2005.					
BROWN, Cha'pelle	DB	5-9, 170	★★	La Puente, CA	Los Altos
Intercepted eight passes as a senior. ... Also contributed more than 1,600 offensive yards and 19 touchdowns.					
DRESCHER, Justin	OL	6-2, 245	★★	Southlake, TX	Carroll
Projects as a long snapper. ... Snapped every extra point, field goal and punt in 32 games with only one bad snap.					
FAATAGI, Erick	OL	6-3, 220	★★	Torrance, CA	El Camino College
All-American honorable mention at offensive guard last season. ... Blocked for two 1,000-yard running backs in high school at Los Angeles Dorsey.					
FENDRY, Steven	TE	6-6, 232	★★★	Castle Rock, CO	Douglas County
Rivals.com's No. 28 tight end. ... No. 6 recruit in Colorado. ... As a senior, caught 37 passes for 571 yards and nine touchdowns. ... Took snaps at defensive end and long snapper.					
HAWKINS, Cody	QB	5-11, 176	★★★	Boise, ID	Bishop Kelly
Rivals.com's No. 17 pro-style quarterback. ... No. 1 prospect in Idaho. ... Son of Colorado coach Dan Hawkins. ... Over the last two seasons, threw 73 touchdown passes against 13 interceptions. ... Offense in 2005 scored 607 points in 12 games.					
HAWKINS, Jonathan	DB	5-10, 179	★★	Moreno Valley, CA	Rancho Verde
Had 90 tackles and two interceptions during his senior season. ... Didn't start playing football until junior year.					
HERROD, Marquez	DE	6-3, 220	★★★	Escondido, CA	San Pasqual
Rivals.com's No. 20 weakside defensive end. ... No. 75 recruit in California. ... Had five sacks as a senior. ... Also blocked two kicks.					

NAME	POS.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
LANG, Sherman	WR	6-0, 162	★★★	Boca Raton, FL	Air Academy
Started at quarterback as a senior. ... Threw for 935 yards and ran for 250 yards. ... At cornerback, intercepted three passes in 2005.					
LAWSON, Eric	DT	6-4, 265	★★★	Castle Rock, CO	Douglas County
Rivals.com's No. 14 recruit in Colorado. ... First-team All-State as a senior. ... Had five sacks as a senior. ... Also played offensive line and tight end.					
NONU, Justin	LB	6-2, 250	★★★	Oceanside, CA	Oceanside
Rivals.com's No. 46 inside linebacker. ... No. 88 overall recruit in California. ... First-team All-State as a junior. ... As a senior, had 177 tackles and five sacks.					
PEREZ, Thomas	RB	6-1, 220	★★★	Compton, CA	Compton CC
Rivals.com's No. 50 junior college recruit. ... Averaged 8.2 yards per carry. ... Rushed for 928 yards and 14 touchdowns.					
ROUSON, Jaslee	RB	5-10, 220	★★	Princeton, NJ	The Hun School
Rivals.com's No. 26 recruit in New Jersey. ... First-team All-State running back. ... Second team All-State as cornerback. ... Rushed for 600 yards on 65 carries as a senior. ... Father Lee Rouson played for Colorado from 1980-84 before going to the NFL.					
SIMON, Wes	OL	6-1, 284	★★★	Piano, TX	West
Rivals.com's No. 12 center. ... As a senior, had 101 pancake blocks and allowed one sack as a left tackle. ... Also played nose tackle.					
SIPILI, Michael	LB	6-1, 240	★★★	Honolulu, HI	Damien Memorial
Rivals.com's No. 34 inside linebacker. ... No. 4 recruit in Hawaii. ... Recorded eight sacks, five fumble recoveries and four forced fumbles as a senior.					
SMITH, Jimmy	ATH	6-1, 175	★★★	Colton, CA	Colton
Rivals.com's No. 57 athlete. ... No. 64 recruit in California. ... Averaged 21.2 yards per catch as a senior. ... On defense, had two interceptions and 15 pass deflections. ... Averaged 36 yards per punt return.					
SOLDER, Nate	TE	6-8, 240	★★★	Buena Vista, CA	Buena Vista
Rivals.com's No. 8 recruit in Colorado. ... No. 35 tight end. ... First-team All-State on offense and defense. ... Caught 31 passes for 513 yards and eight touchdowns.					
SUMLER, Demetrius	RB	5-10, 220	★★★	San Diego	Cathedral Catholic
Rivals.com's No. 48 running back. ... No. 98 recruit in California. ... Rushed for 2,467 yards and 31 touchdowns as a senior.					
VITALE, JR., Ino	ATH	6-5, 245	★★	Pago Pago, Samoa	Nuuuli Tech
Four-year starter at tight end. ... Used as a blocker, but caught 30 passes for 600 yards and five touchdowns as a senior.					

BUFFALOES SPRING ROSTER

NOTEBOOK

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
55	JASON ACKERMANN	ILB	6-1	225	Sr	Louisville	85	NICK HOLZ	WR	5-11	180	Sr	Danville, CA
35	JOEL ADAMS	DB	5-11	185	So	Steamboat Springs	86	GEORGE HYPOLITE	DT	6-2	265	So	Los Angeles, CA
81	JUSTIN ADAMS	TE	6-1	225	So	Denver	7	BERNARD JACKSON	QB	6-0	195	Jr	Corona, CA
20	DANIEL AGOSTINO	P	6-2	215	Fr	Katonah, NY	42	SAMSON JAGORAS	FB	5-10	225	Jr	Arcadia, CA
60	PAUL BACKOWSKI	OL	6-6	285	Fr	Foley, MN	40	BRAD JONES	OLB	6-4	220	So	East Lansing, MI
8	ALVIN BARNETT	WR	6-0	195	Jr	Tulsa, OK	96	MARCUS JONES	DT	6-4	295	Sr	Klein, TX
47	ALONZO BARRETT	DE	6-3	240	Jr	Alabaster, AL	50	ZACH JONES	C	6-3	270	Fr	Aurora
34	JAKE BEHRENS	FB	5-11	235	Fr	Omaha, NE	6	REGGIE JOSEPH	WR	6-0	185	Jr	La Place, LA
5	J.J. BILLINGSLEY	S	5-11	185	Sr	Aurora	13	MICHAEL KACHMER	WR	6-0	175	Fr	Wheaton, IL
33	WALTER BOYE-DOE	DE	6-2	245	Sr	Keller, TX	97	TAJ KAYNOR	DE	6-5	250	Fr	Englewood
18	DOMINIQUE BROOKS	S	6-1	180	Sr	Mesquite, TX	51	ALEX LIGON	DE	6-3	265	Sr	Torrance, CA
12	MACK BROWN	QB	6-3	215	Fr	Overland Park, KS	91	MAURICE LUCAS	DE	6-4	240	So	Denver
34	R.J. BROWN	ILB	6-1	225	So	Honolulu, HI	9	BLAKE MACKEY	WR	6-3	200	Sr	Bakersfield, CA
42	BEN BURNEY	CB	5-11	190	So	Lone Tree	57	BRYCE MACMARTIN	C	6-2	290	Sr	San Francisco, CA
54	MARCUS BURTON	ILB	6-0	230	So	Channelview, TX	38	CHASE MCBRIDE	WR	5-8	160	Jr	Thornton
32	MAURICE CANTRELL	ILB	6-0	225	So	Cedar Rapids, IA	6	GARDNER MCKAY	CB	5-11	160	So	Inglewood, CA
19	BEN CARPENTER	OLB	6-3	225	Sr	Des Moines, IA	23	KEVIN MOYD	TB	5-8	185	Fr	Miramar, FL
2	HUGH CHARLES	TB	5-8	185	Jr	Southlake, TX	94	BRANDON NICOLAS	DT	6-3	270	So	Santa Ana, CA
10	JAMES COX	QB	6-3	215	Sr	Simi Valley, CA	77	TYLER POLJUMBUS	OL	6-8	285	Jr	Englewood
16	CODY CRAWFORD	WR	5-11	170	So	San Diego, CA	1	STEPHON ROBINSON	CB	5-9	185	Jr	Denver
30	PAUL CREIGHTON	TE	6-5	245	Sr	Niwot	75	DANIEL SANDERS	OL	6-3	300	So	Vista, CA
16	MASON CROSBY	PK	6-2	210	Sr	Georgetown, TX	13	JOE SANDERS	OLB	6-3	220	Jr	Nashville, TN
37	CHAD CUSWORTH	OLB	5-11	220	Sr	Highlands Ranch	88	DEVIN SHANAHAN	TE	6-5	210	Fr	Highlands Ranch
66	BRIAN DANIELS	OL	6-4	300	Sr	Evergreen	15	CHARLIE SHERMAN, III	WR	6-1	195	So	Sacramento, CA
5	PATRICK DEVENNY	QB	6-3	225	Fr	Roseville, CA	22	LORENZO SIMS, JR.	CB/S	5-11	185	Sr	Fresno, CA
84	TYSON DEVREE	TE	6-6	245	Jr	Hudsonville, MI	45	JEFF SMART	ILB	6-0	210	Fr	Boulder
14	MATTHEW DILALLO	P	6-1	190	Fr	Wellington, FL	83	DUSTY SPRAGUE	WR	6-4	190	Jr	Holyoke
44	JORDAN DIZON	ILB	6-0	220	Jr	Kauai, HI	41	BRYAN STENGEL	ILB	6-2	205	Fr	Durango
39	KEVIN EBERHART	PK	5-10	190	Jr	Broomfield	4	TOM SUAZO	P	5-11	180	So	Glenwood Springs
22	BYRON ELLIS	TB	6-0	205	Jr	Calver City, CA	63	JACK TIPTON	OL	6-3	295	Sr	Arvada
32	BRANDON ENGLISH	TE	6-4	235	Sr	Leawood, KS	15	RYAN WALTERS	S	5-11	200	So	Aurora
58	MARK FENTON	C	6-4	295	Sr	Inglewood, CA	10	TERRY WASHINGTON	CB	5-10	195	Sr	St. Louis, MO
36	REGGIE FOSTER	S	5-11	190	Fr	Long Beach, CA	49	THADDAEUS WASHINGTON	ILB	5-11	245	Sr	Marrero, LA
18	ISAAC GARDEN	PK	6-0	180	Jr	Encino, CA	21	VANCE WASHINGTON	CB	5-10	185	Sr	Friendswood, TX
48	MATT GARRATT	FB	5-10	220	Fr	Danville, CA	8	RYAN WELLER	OLB	5-11	205	So	Westminster
87	RIAR GEER	TE	6-3	245	Fr	Grand Junction	26	TERRENCE WHEATLEY	CB	5-10	175	Jr	Richardson, TX
46	DAN GOETTSCH	TE	6-5	245	Sr	Austin, MN	3	BRIAN WHITE	QB	6-5	225	Jr	Mission Viejo, CA
61	TOM GRUBIN	C	6-0	285	Fr	The Woodlands, TX	4	PATRICK WILLIAMS	WR	6-2	195	So	DeSoto, TX
25	LIONEL HARRIS	S	6-0	190	Jr	Manvel, TX	20	TERRY WILSON	CB	5-11	200	So	Chino, CA
76	EDWIN HARRISON	OL	6-4	300	Jr	Houston, TX	53	ABRAHAM WRIGHT	DE	6-3	240	Sr	Oklahoma City, OK
68	JEREMY HAUCK	OL	6-4	275	Fr	Niwot	80	JARRELL YATES	WR	6-0	185	Fr	Denver
72	DEVIN HEAD	OL	6-4	275	Fr	Corona, CA	23	MATT YEGGE	S	6-3	200	So	Longmont
3	TYRONE HENDERSON	S	5-10	180	Sr	Oakland, CA	92	SAM ZIMMERER	DE	6-3	245	Fr	Colorado Springs
37	MELL HOLLIDAY	TB	5-8	205	Sr	Omaha, NE							

When Colorado decided to fire coach Gary Barnett last season and replace him with Dan Hawkins, some in Boulder wondered whether a mass exodus of players would follow.

Not at all.

Through mid-May, Colorado had reported no losses to transfer, an oddity in the volatile world of big-time college athletics.

The retention success is likely due, in part at least, to Hawkins' decision to retain two of Barnett's assistant coaches — linebackers coach Brian Cabral and running backs coach Darian Hagan — along with strength coach Greg Finnegan, who parted ways with the program late in the spring.

Tailback Brandon Caesar and cornerback Gerett Burl are the only underclassmen on last season's team not expected back. Chronic knee pain ended Caesar's career, though he is still enrolled in classes, and disciplinary problems ended Burl's time in Boulder.

Caesar didn't play last season, but Burl was a starter at one cornerback position. Fortunately, the Buffs have a wealth of depth in the secondary.

Burl's departure was the first clear signal that while Hawkins often comes across as a player's coach who likes to have fun and try new things, he won't tolerate nonsense.

Colorado signed 21 players for the 2006 recruiting class and was still working on several possible additions after spring football. It is the lowest-ranked class to come to Boulder in years, with most experts placing it in the bottom half of the top 100.

The vast majority of the class committed to CU in the final weeks of the recruiting process. Only two members of the class come from junior colleges, and those two players — running back Thomas Perez and offensive lineman Erick Faatagi — are the most ready to contribute early.

The most intriguing story in the class is that of defensive end Marquez Herrod, who spent part of his childhood homeless on the streets of San Diego. Herrod was ranked the No. 20 weakside end in the country at the end of his senior season by Rivals.com at San Pasqual High School.

(7-6, 5-3)

W	Colorado State	31-28
W	New Mexico State	39-0
L	at Miami	3-23
W	at Oklahoma State	34-0
W	Texas A&M	41-20
L	at Texas	17-42
W	Kansas	44-13
W	at Kansas State	23-20
W	Missouri	41-12
L	at Iowa State	16-30
L	Nebraska	3-30
Big 12 Championship		
L	Texas	3-70
Champs Sports Bowl		
L	Clemson	10-19

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Klatt	12	124.4	400	241	8	60.3	2696	14	64	224.7
Cox	7	71.8	29	13	0	44.8	93	0	17	13.3

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Charles	12	176	917	75	842	4.8	6	74	70.2
Vickers	12	67	254	11	243	3.6	9	20	20.3
Ellis	12	75	241	25	216	2.9	0	25	18.0

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Sprague	12	43	468	10.9	1	62	39.0
Judge	12	40	567	14.2	2	38	47.3
Klopfenstein	12	32	463	14.5	4	44	38.6

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Washington 112, Billingsley 85, Henderson 78
Interceptions: Burton 2, Hubbard 2, Burl 2, Billingsley 2
Sacks: Washington 5, Wright 5, Iwuh 3, Dizon 3
Tackles for loss: Washington 8, Billingsley 5, Garce 5



HUGH CHARLES

Wheatley, a 2004 starter, returns after a season lost to wrist surgery. Sophomore Gardner McKay should emerge as a starter opposite Wheatley.

Defensive tackle is the area of concern after the Buffs lost two seniors who started every game last season and helped lead the unit to a No. 1 national ranking against the run heading into the final regular-season game.

Regardless of who earns the starting jobs at tackle, the Buffs will be young and

inexperienced in the middle because none of the available talent has logged much playing time.

Brandon Nicholas, a sophomore transfer from Notre Dame, figures to start at nose tackle, but he hasn't played much football since his senior season in high school.

CU is two-deep with capable players at every other position on the defense, including five ends likely to earn playing time.

Senior linebacker Thaddaeus Washington is a candidate for the Butkus Award and was the team leader in tackles last season. He leads a solid experienced linebacker corps that includes junior Jordon Dizon, already a two-year starter.

Brad Jones, a rangy sophomore, has the skills to rush the passer and help in pass coverage as an outside linebacker. He replaces departed senior Brian Iwuh.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Already the best place-kicker in the nation, senior Mason Crosby emerged from spring as the favorite to replace punter John Torp.

The Buffs had one of the best punt units in the nation under the former coaching staff the past two years. True freshman Justin Drescher should fill the void at long snapper.

Crosby's leg is a threat to provide points as soon as the offense reaches the 50-yard line. No other team in the country has such a weapon. He kicks the ball

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

PK Mason Crosby

Yeah, the place-kicker. He's the nation's best, and there is too much uncertainty at quarterback and with the offensive line to think someone else fits the bill here. ... Crosby could have jumped to the NFL after last season when he was named a consensus All-American. ... His 58-yard field goal at Miami last fall was the longest without a tee in NCAA history at sea level. ... He made a 60-yard attempt at home in 2004. ... He is 47 of 60 in field goals in his career, including 23 of 25 from 40 yards or less. ... He is 10 of 10 in field goal attempts in the final nine minutes of games in his career.



EMERGING STAR

DE Maurice Lucas

Entered his first game in the fourth quarter of a blowout loss at Texas last season, and found himself in the starting lineup the next week. He remained there the rest of his true freshman season. ... Played in seven games, finishing with 20 total tackles, including four for loss. ... Had five quarterback pressures, but no sacks. ... Came out of spring practice listed second at both defensive end positions as he adjusted to a new system and new position coach. The new staff is just as excited about his potential as the former coaches.



TOP NEWCOMER

RB Demetrius Sumler

A true freshman tailback who completed his career as the San Diego area's all-time leading rusher with 5,650 yards and 67 career touchdowns. This is an area that produced Heisman Trophy winners Reggie Bush, Ricky Williams, Rashaan Salaam and Marcus Allen. ... He rushed for 2,467 yards and 31 scores as a senior at Cathedral Catholic High School. He also caught 15 passes for 250 yards and a touchdown. ... He was a first-team all-state player and the North County Player of the Year.



Colorado's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

THADDAEUS WASHINGTON



Photo by John Williamson

Leader Emerges After Tough Times

Colorado middle linebacker Thaddaeus Washington arrived from Louisiana five years ago as a shy young man often supplying polite one-word answers to questions or greetings.

He was more than 1,000 miles from home and a million miles from any kind of leadership role on the team.

In the years since, he has endured the shooting death of his older brother and the uprooting of his family due to Hurricane Katrina.

Through those experiences he has learned to embrace the people around him, and now he is a regular student body representative and speech-maker at booster club events and other public gatherings surrounding the Colorado athletic department.

His successes on and off the field have allowed him to grow into the role he will fill this fall — team leader.

"It's a learning process," Washington said.

"Leading is not easy because you've got to make sure you're always doing the right thing and not slacking sometimes. You've got to be always on the straight path doing the right thing because it's not just your teammates watching."

Washington proved to be the Buffs' best defensive player at the end of last season. It's a back-handed compliment for a defense that surrendered 100 points in its final two Big 12 games against Nebraska and Texas.

But it's also a defense that led the nation in run defense late in the year, in large part because of Washington.

The 5-11, 240-pound Butkus Award candidate registered at least 10 tackles in six of the final seven games and was the first Buff to register more than 100 tackles in a season since safety Michael Lewis did it in 2001.

"Right now, it really doesn't mean nothing to be honest," Washington said of his chances of becoming CU's third Butkus winner.

"The season is not here ... but if that happens in the future, that would be great."

By the time the season arrives, Washington will have lived nearly nine months with the memory of a 70-3 loss to Texas in the Big 12 championship game.

"I don't dwell on it, but I think it's going to be in the back of my head," he said. "It's just something I have to live with, and my teammates also. We just have to keep on getting better and never let it happen again."

out of the end zone on kickoffs so often that the team has rarely devoted practice time to kickoffs the past two seasons.

Stephone Robinson has proven to be one of the more dangerous return men in the Big 12.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Colorado is one of just nine Division I-A teams never to have played a I-AA team, but that streak will end in the season opener against Montana State.

Don't be fooled though; the Buffs still pride themselves on taking on the nation's best. Colorado has played 87 ranked opponents since 1989, the fourth-most nationally in that span.

The annual in-state match with Colorado State returns to neutral territory this fall in Denver. The Buffs also play host to Arizona State and travel to Georgia in the non-conference season.

The most difficult challenges in Big 12 play come at Oklahoma and at Nebraska, where CU has won two consecutive meetings. Kansas State, Iowa State and Texas Tech all come to Boulder.

— Kyle Ringo

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	MONTANA STATE
Sept. 9	at Colorado State
Sept. 16	ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 23	at Georgia
Sept. 30	at Missouri
Oct. 7	BAYLOR
Oct. 14	TEXAS TECH
Oct. 21	at Oklahoma
Oct. 28	at Kansas
Nov. 4	KANSAS STATE
Nov. 11	IOWA STATE
Nov. 24	at Nebraska



RICE

OWLS

Start Spreading the News: Owls Scheme to Pass More OFFENSE

Last year's 1-10 record is ancient history. There's a new head coach — Todd Graham — and a new spread offense ... although Rice still should be able to run the ball effectively.

Ten starters return from a unit that used an option-based attack to rank second in C-USA in rushing with 234.2 yards per game.

Sophomore quarterback Chase Clement threw for 582 yards and five touchdowns in a backup role last season (when he was selected to the C-USA All-Freshman team), and he'll be the new starter due to his passing skills.

He completed only 42.7 percent of his passes last season, but had a good feeling going into the summer after hitting 32 of 43 attempts for 371 yards in the spring game.

Last year's first-stringer, Joel Armstrong, also will get snaps at quarterback, but is the starter at an inside wide receiver spot.

Leading rusher Quinton Smith returns at running back (902 yards on 140 carries) after earning second-team all-conference honors. Freshman fullback Trey Hopson won a starting job in the spring.

Sophomore Jarett Dillard, another All-Freshman honoree, was Rice's top pass catcher in 2005 with 35, including five touchdowns. Mike Falco is a versatile receiver/running back who could excel in the new offense. Will Moss is back at tight end.

The entire line returns except left guard Cory Laxen. Veteran Robby Heos moves from left tackle to replace him. Austin Wilkinson, an All-Freshman performer in 2005, is at center. Rolf

Krueger, who started 11 games last year, returns at right tackle.

DEFENSE

The Owls ranked last in C-USA in total defense last season, allowing 30 points or more in all but one game. They return six starters, but the losses include standout lineman John Syptak and linebacker Adam Herrin.

There are three new faces at linebacker. Senior and former running back Marcus Rucker starts on the strong side. Converted defensive lineman Vernon James will play the middle. Fellow sophomore Brian Raines covers the weak side.

Both defensive ends are gone. Junior Jonathan Cary steps in on one side, joined by senior Courtney Gordon at the other end. George Chukwu is the new starter at nose guard, but former starter William Wood should get his share of playing time.

Four starters are back in the secondary in Rice's 3-3-5 scheme. Chad Price, at bandit, should be the defense's biggest playmaker. He had 9.5 tackles for loss last season and broke up four passes.

Returning cornerbacks Brandon King and Ja'Corey Shepherd each had two interceptions in 2005.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Brennan Landry is gone, but Luke Juist looks up to the challenge. Jared Scruggs returns as punter. Brandon King is the likely choice to return punts, while free safety Andray Downs and running back Marcus Knox will share kickoff return duty.

—Steve Hunt

AT A GLANCE

2005

1-10 overall, 1-7 C-USA (T-6th, West)

COACH

Todd Graham — At Rice and overall: 1st year

RETURNING STARTERS

16; 9 offense, 6 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Chase Clement, RB Quinton Smith, C Austin Wilkinson, WR Jarett Dillard, LB Marcus Rucker, DB Chad Price

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Rice has proven talent at running back and receiver. New head coach Todd Graham intends to throw the ball more than his predecessor, which explains why sophomore Chase Clement is the new QB.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Graham has installed new schemes on both sides of the ball, and the adjustment period typically takes a full season. The Owls have won only four games in two seasons, so there is much work to do across the board.

KEY LOSSES

DE John Syptak, DE Thadis Pegues, LB Adam Herrin, K Brennan Landry

OVERVIEW

Ken Hatfield is out and Todd Graham is in. This is his first Division I-A head coaching job, but his solid credentials include being the defensive coordinator for 2005 C-USA champion Tulsa. Things won't turn around overnight for the Owls, but there is reason to think this will be a good long-term hire.

**IOWA STATE****CYCLONES***For more coverage of the Cyclones, visit www.iowastate.rivals.com*

AT A GLANCE

2005

7-5 overall; 4-4 Big 12 (T-2nd, North)

COACH

Dan McCarney — At Iowa State and overall: 52-77, 12th year

RETURNING STARTERS

15; 10 offense, 4 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Bret Meyer, RB Stevie Hicks, WR Todd Blythe, OL Scott Stephenson, DT Brent Curvey, CB DeAndre Jackson

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

The offense could be the most dangerous in the North Division with all but one starter returning. Junior quarterback Bret Meyer is in his third year as the starter and will begin his assault on ISU's record book this fall.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The defense is in transition, with all three linebacker spots and three-fourths of the secondary gone. In the Big 12 schedule, Iowa State trades South bottom-feeders Baylor, Oklahoma State and Texas A&M for Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech.

KEY LOSSES

NG Nick Leaders, DE Jason Berryman, LB Matt Robertson, LB Tim Dobbins, FS Steve Paris, P Troy Blankenship

OVERVIEW

The defense is going to give up some points; it's just a matter of how many. The Cyclones' offense will be strong, but can it carry the load considering the schedule might be the most difficult in school history? A sixth bowl trip in seven years is possible, but by no means a sure thing.

So Close ... Can Offense Help Cyclones Take Next Step?

The fear among Iowa State football followers is that the Cyclones' window of opportunity to play for a Big 12 championship has closed. Whether that fear is justified depends on who you ask.

The North Division is improving, although it is still not as imposing as years ago when Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas State were superpowers. The Cyclones had the division in their grasp in each of the past two years, needing a victory in the regular-season finale.

Kansas broke their hearts last year, much the same way Missouri punched them in the gut in 2004.

It's going to take a few breaks and a little bit of luck to get back to that spot again this season. If they do, the Cyclones will have earned it.

They return almost their entire offense, but bring back just four players off one of the Big 12's most stingy and turnover-happy defenses. Some key pieces of the kicking game — integral to the team's success — are also being replaced.

The Cyclones also face nine teams that played in bowl games last year, not including Division I-AA runner-up Northern Iowa.

They trade last year's South Division bottom feeders Baylor, Oklahoma State and Texas A&M for Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech — a trio that combined to go 20-4 in conference play.

"We have a tough schedule," said senior cornerback DeAndre Jackson. "To me it's like a jackpot. I'm not afraid of any-

thing. I'm hyped and I'm pretty sure all the rest of the guys are."

Coach Dan McCarney enters his 12th season at ISU as the Big 12's dean of coaches.

"It's very prestigious to know that you've seen lots and lots of outstanding coaches and administrators come through and I'm still standing," McCarney said.

His overall record of 52-77 is somewhat misleading, though folks also say that about his streak of five (lower-level) bowl appearances in the past six years.

Yes, the Cyclones are light years ahead of where they were in McCarney's early years. But now that they've had winning seasons and come oh-so-close to a North title and big-time bowl game, the bar has been raised. Fans want to take the next step.

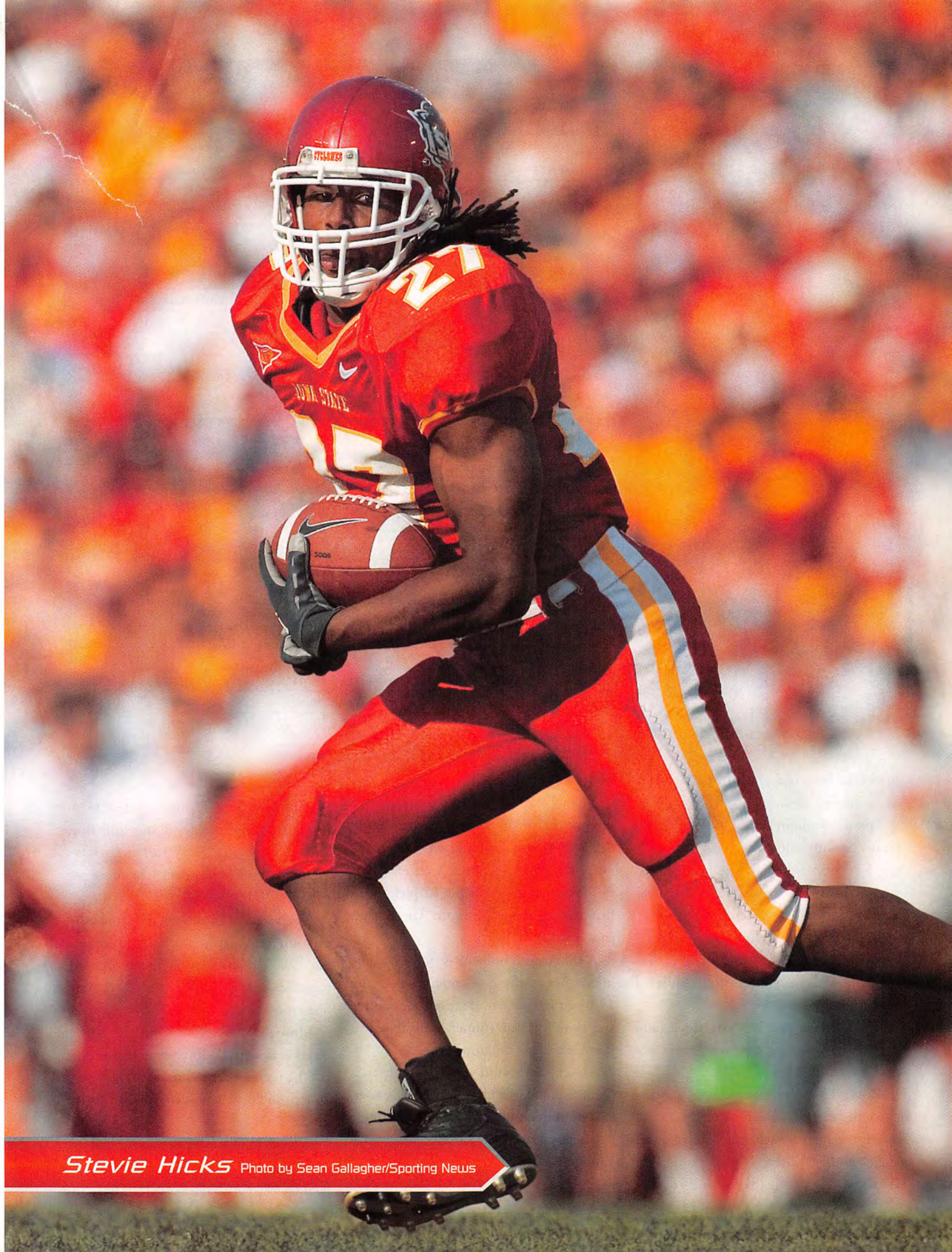
The Cyclones are close. Will this be the year they play for the Big 12 title?

"We've always been underdogs and people always look down on us," Jackson said. "We've got something to prove."

OFFENSE

Bret Meyer might be the best quarterback in the Big 12, and he has a collection of capable targets, but re-establishing the running game will determine whether this team will play in the postseason.

Senior tailback Stevie Hicks comes in again as the starter. ISU was far more effective with him in the lineup, though



Stevie Hicks Photo by Sean Gallagher/Sporting News



Hicks has been maligned his entire career as an average runner.

Speedy sophomore Jason Harris will be his backup, and coaches are still waiting for Jason Scales to get healthy and round into the form he showed as a record-setting Iowa prep star.

Receiver is the Cyclones' deepest position, even with senior Jon Davis potentially out with an Achilles' injury suffered in spring.

Todd Blythe is a big-play threat and Meyer's favorite target entering their second season together.

What has strengthened the passing game the most has been the emergence of converted quarterback Austin Flynn and tight ends Walter Nickel and Ben Barkema. Flynn led ISU with 56 recep-

Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 110.7 ypg rushing (8th Big 12/96th NCAA), 239.7 ypg passing (2nd/37th), 350.3 total offense (6th/76th), 28.3 ppg (5th/50th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Bret Meyer*	Jr.	Preseason favorite for first-team All-Big 12.	Kyle Van Winkle, Sr.
RB	Stevie Hicks*	Sr.	Is a difference-maker when healthy.	Jason Harris, So.
WR	Todd Blythe*	Jr.	Most difficult wideout in conference to defend.	Marquis Hamilton, Fr.
WR	Austin Flynn*	Sr.	Ex-QB led team in catches (56) in first year at WR.	Euseph Messiah, So.
WR	Jon Davis*	Sr.	Burner's status in doubt due to Achilles' injury.	R.J. Sumrall, So.
TE	Ben Barkema*	Jr.	Is a skilled receiver and blocker.	Walter Nickel, Sr.
LT	Aaron Brant*	Sr.	A mainstay on line since he was a freshman.	Lee Tibbs, Jr.
LG	Seth Zehr*	Sr.	Best qualities over time: consistency, versatility.	Tom Schmeling, So.
C	Scott Stephenson*	Sr.	Stronger than last year's All-Big 12 season.	Bastian Schober, Jr.
RG	Ahtyba Rubin	Jr.	Junior college transfer steps in at line's weakest spot.	Paul Fisher, Sr.
RT	Scott Fisher*	Sr.	Started final six games of last season.	Landon Streit, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 102.7 ypg rushing (4th Big 12/12th NCAA), 242.3 ypg passing (10th/82nd), 345.0 ypg total defense (6th/35th), 19.2 ppg (3rd/20th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Collins Eboh	Jr.	Transfer's experience critical for young group.	Kurtis Taylor, Jr.
DT	Brent Curvey*	Sr.	Few more inches and 6-footer is NFL material.	Stephon Dale, Fr.
DT	Bryce Braaksma	Jr.	Several players will see time here.	Matt Berg, Fr.
DE	Shawn Moorehead*	Sr.	Former walk-on now a huge asset.	Rashawn Parker, Fr.
LB	Tyrone McKenzie	So.	Michigan State transfer is the man in middle.	Jesse Smith, Fr.
LB	Adam Carper*	So.	Athletic, but still has lots to learn.	Kris Means, Fr.
LB	Alvin Bowen	Jr.	First-time starter is fast, athletic and strong.	Josh Raven, Fr.
CB	DeAndre Jackson*	Sr.	Playmaker should be All-Big 12.	Chris Brown, So.
CB	Chris Singleton	So.	Saw some time last year as a true freshman.	Steve Johnson, Fr.
SS	James Smith	Fr.	Big tackler has work to do on pass coverage.	Caleb Berg, Jr.
FS	Jon Banks	Jr.	Last year's nickel back is now a full-timer.	Brandon Hunley, So.

*Returning starter

tions last year.

There could be five seniors starting on the line, led by multi-year starters Aaron Brant and Seth Zehr. Brant has started 34 consecutive games. Center Scott Stephenson was an All-Big 12 pick in his first season at the position. The biggest concern here is depth.

A wild card is fullback Ryan Kock. The junior found the end zone a whopping 13 times last season as strictly a goal line and short-yardage runner. Can he repeat that kind of production?

Meyer, in his third year as the starter, is the conference's leading returning passer. The junior completed 61.7 percent of his passes last year, behind only Texas' Vince Young and Texas Tech's Cody Hodges in the Big 12.

DEFENSE

This will be a season of adjustment on the defensive side. Three full-time and one part-time starter return to a unit that allowed just 19.2 points per game in 2005.

"We've got a lot of new guys and a lot of young guys, so we're really up-tempo and excited to be in there playing together," said senior defensive end Shawn Moorehead.

Moorehead is one of two returnees on the defensive line. First-team All-Big 12 tackle Brent Curvey is the other, and probably the most valuable piece of the defense.

Several newcomers could be helping to fill the hole vacated by fellow all-conference lineman Nick Leaders. The abili-



Josh Johnson, RB

Iowa State has done a good job the past few years recruiting in Oklahoma, and Johnson was one of the state's top prospects in 2005. Other Big 12 schools shied away from Johnson because he wasn't the fastest around, but with ISU's great tradition at running back, many in Ames believe that the Cyclones have another budding star on their hands.



Matt Hulbert, OL

Hulbert has a massive 6-7, 274-pound frame to work with. He'll need some time in the weight room at Iowa State, but once he packs on more muscle, he'll be a good one to work with. Hulbert is athletic and has good feet. He was the No. 2 player in the state of Iowa.



Austen Arnaud, QB

Ranked as the top player in the state for the class of 2006, Arnaud was a huge local signing for the Cyclones. While quarterback isn't a position that is hurting for talent, Arnaud is primed to be Iowa State's signal-caller of the future. He's a great athlete and has great size at 6-3 and 200 pounds. He is the perfect fit for what Iowa State likes to do with its quarterbacks.



Austin Alburty, LB

Impressed everybody at the Oklahoma summer camp, but the Sooners didn't offer him. But a few days later, Iowa State did after he camped in Ames, and it was an offer he jumped on. At 6-2, 260-pounds, Alburty could grow into a defensive end, but with his motor it doesn't matter. He'll be a very good fit for the Cyclones.

Commitments	30
Average Stars	2.50
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	15
★★★☆☆	15
Total Stars	75
National Rank: 63	CONF: 11

2007 NEEDS

Dan McCarney always likes hardnosed and rugged players, so look for that trend to continue in 2007. The 2006 group was very balanced with depth at almost every position, but look for some more help at defensive back and linebacker to be called on for next year. Receiver could also be a spot where more talent is needed.

NAME	POS.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ALBURTY, Austin	DE	6-2, 260	★★	Dallas	Tyler Street Christian
Played only one game as a senior due to an ankle injury. ... First-team All-State as a junior. ... Also played basketball, baseball and track.					
ARNAUD, Austen	QB	6-3, 200	★★★★	Ames, IA	Ames
Rivals.com's No. 6 dual-threat quarterback. ... No. 1 recruit in Iowa. ... Father John Arnaud was three-year starting defensive back for Iowa State.					
BOH, Collins	DE	6-4, 250	★★	Mason City, IA	N. Iowa Area CC
Played in seven games at Iowa State in 2004 before transferring to NIACC. ... Had five sacks in seven games last season.					
FRERE, Nate	DT	6-2, 270	★★	Muscatine, IA	Muscatine
Rivals.com's No. 6 recruit in Iowa. ... Brother Nick Frere is Iowa State defensive end.					
GARRIN, Fred	LB	6-1, 215	★★★	Shepherd, TX	Shepherd
Rivals.com's No. 55 inside linebacker. ... All-State honorable mention. ... Had 166 tackles the last two seasons.					
HULBERT, Matt	OL	6-7, 274	★★★★	Ankeny, IA	Ankeny
Rivals.com's No. 56 offensive tackle. ... No. 2 recruit in Iowa. ... Did not allow a sack as a junior or senior.					
JOHNSON, Bailey	DT	6-2, 237	★★★	Homewood, IL	Flossmoor
Rivals.com's No. 24 recruit in Illinois. ... Had 17 sacks as a senior. ... Father played football at SMU and Oklahoma State.					
JOHNSON, Josh	RB	5-10, 204	★★★★	Ponca City, OK	Ponca City
Rivals.com's No. 42 running back. ... No. 14 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Rushed for 2,095 yards on 273 carries as a senior. ... Scored 25 touchdowns.					
LAMAAK, Ben	TE	6-4, 265	★★	Cedar Rapids, IA	Kennedy
Rivals.com's No. 8 recruit in Iowa. ... First-team All-State. ... Played quarterback in last six high-school games.					
LEADERS, Matt	LB	6-0, 195	★★	Omaha, NE	Millard West
First-team Academic All-State. ... Finished career with 150 tackles and two fumble returns for touchdowns.					
MCDOWELL, Devin	DB	5-9, 160	★★	Garland, TX	Garland
Intercepted eight career passes as a safety. ... Also played running back and returned kicks and punts. ... Brother DeAndre Jackson is an Iowa State defensive back.					
MCKINNEY, Prince	DB	5-9, 171	★★	Broken Arrow, OK	Broken Arrow
Rivals.com's No. 22 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Blocked five kicks on special teams. ... Intercepted three passes.					
MEANS, Kris	LB	6-0, 220	★★★★	Grand Junction, CO	Grand Junction
Rivals.com's No. 44 inside linebacker. ... No. 9 recruit in Colorado. ... Only Class 4A and 5A player to rank in top 10 in rushing and tackles in consecutive years.					
MONTGOMERY, Derron	WR	6-1, 175	★★★	Garland, TX	South Garland
Missed most of senior season due to injury. ... In high school career, caught 29 passes for 342 yards. ... Father Wilbert Montgomery is St. Louis Rams running backs coach.					

NAME	POS.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
MOORE, Mitchell	ATH	6-0, 201	★★★	Gurnee, IL	Warren Township
Rivals.com's No. 23 recruit in Illinois. ... Rushed for 1,353 yards and 25 touchdowns as a senior.					
NEAL, Patrick	DE	6-0, 225	★★	West Des Moines, IA	Valley
Rivals.com's No. 7 recruit in Iowa. ... Father played offensive line at Iowa State. ... Brother John Neal plays basketball at ISU.					
PALMER, Randy	ATH	5-11, 180	★★	Tulsa, OK	Tulsa
Rivals.com's No. 23 recruit in Oklahoma. ... First-team All-State. ... Passed for 1,587 yards and 27 touchdowns.					
PARKER, Rashawn	ATH	6-0, 235	★★★	Ponca City, OK	Ponca City
Rivals.com's No. 21 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Led Class 6A with 18 sacks.					
PURVIS, Matt	ATH	6-2, 225	★★	Scottsdale, AZ	Scottsdale CC
Played long snapper at Scottsdale. ... Graduated from Tempe (Ariz.) Corona Del Sol.					
RICHARDSON, John	DT	6-1, 245	★★	Humble, TX	Humble
First-team All-District. ... Had five sacks and three pass breakups.					
ROBERTSON, Justin	DB	6-4, 190	★★	Port Arthur, TX	Memorial
First-team All-District. ... Had five interceptions as a senior.					
ROBINSON, Alexander	RB	5-10, 168	★★★★	Minneapolis	De La Salle
Rivals.com's No. 52 running back. ... No. 9 recruit in Minnesota. ... Rushed for 2,340 yards and 31 touchdowns on 201 carries.					
RUBIN, Ahtyba	OL	6-4, 325	★★★★	Athens, TX	Trinity Valley CC
Rivals.com's No. 73 overall junior college recruit. ... Hadn't played offensive line until 2005.					
RUSSELL, Derrick	WR	6-4, 183	★★★	Lincoln, NE	North Star
Rivals.com's No. 5 recruit in Nebraska. ... Father played football at Wisconsin.					
SANDVIG, Zac	ATH	5-10, 171	★★★	West Des Moines, IA	Valley
Rivals.com's No. 4 recruit in Iowa. ... Rushed for 3,500 yards and 37 touchdowns in three seasons.					
SCOTT, Harry	RB	6-2, 200	★★	Sarasota, FL	Riverview
All-District. ... Rushed for 932 yards and seven touchdowns as a senior.					
TIBBS, Lee	OL	6-4, 325	★★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
First-team All-Conference. ... Graduated from Oklahoma City Douglass.					
VARGAS, Jose	OL	6-3, 320	★★★	Sulphur Springs, TX	Sulphur Springs
Rivals.com's No. 56 offensive guard. ... Two-time All-State.					
WHITE, Kellen	DB	5-10, 185	★★	Sarasota, FL	Riverview
Two-time All-State. ... Intercepted 10 career passes. ... Two-time state qualifier in 400-meter dash.					
WILLIAMS, Drenard	ATH	5-10, 170	★★	Beaumont, TX	Westbrook
Played cornerback and wide receiver. ... Had two interceptions and 400 receiving yards.					

CYCLONES SPRING ROSTER

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
16	JON BANKS	DB	6-3	217	Jr	East Moline, IL		SCOTT KRAWA	PK	6-0	202	Jr	Grimes
41	BEN BARKEMA	TE	6-3	245	Jr	Muscatine	16	JUSTIN LILLIE	WR	6-4	211	Fr	Earlham
3	RYAN BAUM	WR	5-10	186	Sr	Gilbert	92	JOHN MACHADO	DL	6-3	245	Sr	Miami, FL
21	CALEB BERG	DB	6-1	203	Jr	Henderson, NE	11	CHRIS MAHOSKI	PK	5-11	172	Fr	Bettendorf
95	MATT BERG	DL	6-4	260	Fr	Aurelia	58	ALEX MCCONEGHEY	LB	6-3	220	So	West Des Moines
14	JOE BLUM	PK	6-2	195	So	Denison	74	JASON MOGNTY	DL	6-0	300	So	Fort Worth, TX
1	TODD BLYTHE	WR	6-5	210	Jr	Indianola	17	TYRONE MCKENZIE	LB	6-2	230	So	Tampa, FL
15	ALVIN BOWEN	LB	6-4	220	Jr	East Orange, NJ	18	NATE MECHAELEN	QB	6-2	205	So	Blairsburg
93	BRYCE BRAAKSMA	DE	6-4	260	Jr	Sheldon	35	CHRIS MEHRING	LB	5-11	220	So	Oak Lawn, IL
49	MICHAEL BRANDTNER	P	6-1	198	Fr	Bettendorf	9	EUSEPH MESSIAH	WR	5-10	171	So	Bettendorf
75	AARON BRANT	OL	6-7	320	Sr	Kieler, WI	7	BRET MEYER	QB	6-3	208	Jr	Atlantic
91	ZAC BROUILLETTE	LB	6-3	230	So	Sioux City	40	SHAWN MOOREHEAD	DE	6-4	250	Sr	Mason City
6	CHRIS BROWN	WR	5-11	180	So	Gainesville, TX	32	MILAN MOSES	WR	6-1	193	Jr	Waterloo
20	NICK CAMPBELL	WR	6-2	200	Sr	Marion	16	WALTER NICKEL, II	TE	6-3	235	Sr	Tacoma, WA
46	JEREMY CAPLIN	WR	5-11	180	Fr	Highland Park, IL		THOMAS PATTON	DE	6-3	275	Sr	Oakland, CA
10	ADAM CARPER	DB	6-3	225	So	Clarinda	27	BRIAN PERRY	LB	6-3	225	So	Eldora
83	DERRICK CATLETT	TE	6-4	235	Fr	Fort Collins, CO	38	TYLER PONTIER	P/PK	5-9	205	So	Indianola
19	JOE CONKLIN	DB	5-10	176	Fr	Davenport	12	DAVID RAHE	DB	6-1	203	Sr	Dyersville
66	BRANDON COOK	OL	6-6	320	Jr	Garner	45	AARON RAMANO	DB	5-11	217	Fr	Council Bluffs
48	TRAVIS CRUISE	LB	6-1	205	Fr	Ames	32	JOSH RAVEN	LB	5-11	205	Fr	Cape Coral, FL
37	BRET CULBERTSON	PK	6-6	179	Jr	Des Moines		REGGIE ROCK	DB	5-9	180	Fr	Minneapolis, MN
52	BRENT CURVEY	DL	6-0	295	Sr	Houston, TX	98	RYNE SANDHAGEN	TE	6-4	260	Jr	Fayette
94	STEPHON DALE	DL	6-3	255	Fr	Fort Myers, FL	6	JASON SCALES	RB	5-9	209	So	West Des Moines
81	JON DAVIS	WR	6-4	203	Sr	Papillion, NE	70	TOM SCHMELING	OL	6-3	290	So	Atlantic
45	STEVEN EBNER	FB	5-10	229	Jr	Sioux City	15	DEREK SCHMIGDALL	QB	6-1	211	Fr	Lincoln, NE
59	BRIAN EKWOLUNDU	PK	5-10	200	Fr	Corpus Christi, TX	78	BASTIAN SCHOBEL	OL	6-2	305	Jr	Petersaurach, Germany
83	TRAVIS FERGUSON	DE	6-5	245	So	Waterloo	89	ERIC SCHULTZ	TE	6-4	230	Fr	Beaver Dam, WI
51	EVAN FICK	LB	6-0	180	Fr	Mitchellville	53	WALKER SCOTT	LB	5-9	207	Jr	Salix
77	PAUL FISHER	OL	6-7	325	Sr	St. George, UT	34	MATT SCRIBBINS	WR	6-4	200	Fr	Clear Lake
69	SCOTT FISHER	OL	6-7	335	Sr	St. George, UT	18	CHRIS SINGLETON	DB	5-10	191	So	Fort Myers, FL
8	AUSTIN FLYNN	WR	6-1	200	Sr	Deer Park, TX	2	JAMES SMITH	DB	5-8	191	Fr	Council Bluffs
25	NICK FRERE	LB	6-2	240	So	Muscatine	57	JESSE SMITH	LB	6-0	230	Fr	Des Moines
71	JORDAN GOOS	OL	6-6	300	So	Treynor	73	REGGIE STEPHENS	OL	6-4	315	Fr	Rowlett, TX
19	JOSH GRIEBAHN	PK	5-8	193	Jr	West Branch	63	SCOTT STEPHENSON	OL	6-4	305	Sr	St. Paul, MN
82	MARQUIS HAMILTON	WR	6-3	217	Fr	Oklahoma City, OK	59	LONDON STREIT	OL	6-5	305	Fr	Barnum
32	NICK HARKLAU	DB	6-0	189	Fr	Humboldt	5	R.J. SUMRALL	WR	6-1	195	So	Winter Park, FL
22	JASON HARRIS	RB	5-11	201	So	Clearwater, FL	47	KURTIS TAYLOR	DL	6-3	250	Jr	Fort Dodge
8	JUSTIN HARRIS	DB	5-11	187	Jr	Davenport	39	RICKY THOMPSON	RB	5-9	202	So	Ames
27	STEVIE HICKS	RB	6-1	212	Sr	Omaha, NE	80	BRANDON TJNLIN	TE	6-4	250	Jr	San Diego, CA
99	NICK HOWE	DL	6-3	255	Jr	State Center	68	JOHN TJADEN	OL	6-7	305	Jr	Mason City
20	BRANDON HUNLEY	DB	5-11	195	So	Grandview, MO	12	TYSON UNKRICH	QB	6-4	170	Fr	Mount Pleasant
4	DeANDRE JACKSON	DB	6-0	192	Sr	Garland, TX	10	KYLE VAN WINKLE	QB	6-6	217	Sr	Story City
29	BRIAN JANSEN	PK	6-3	200	Jr	Overland Park, KS	76	JOE VANSTROM	OL	6-6	310	So	Ham Lake, MN
60	BRANDON JOHNSON	OL	6-4	295	So	Rushville, NE	53	EVAN VENCIL	OL	6-3	255	Fr	Ankeny
23	STEVE JOHNSON	DB	6-2	197	Fr	Denver, CO	55	ANTHONY WALKER	OL	6-2	280	Jr	Spencer, OK
14	HOUSTON JONES, II	DB	6-1	194	Fr	Oklahoma City, OK		DURELL WILLIAMS	DB	5-11	172	Fr	Gibbsonton, FL
48	STEVE KING	PK	5-10	208	Fr	Johnston	58	SETH ZEHR	OL	6-6	300	Sr	Fort Dodge
52	MIKE KNAPP	OL	6-4	270	Fr	West Des Moines	44	TROY ZIMMERMAN	DB	6-1	215	Fr	Bettendorf
31	RYAN KOCK	FB	6-1	239	Sr	Lohrville	17	JOEL ZITEK	WR	6-2	195	Fr	Ulysses, NE

NOTEBOOK

There are several family connections among ISU's freshman class:

- Quarterback **Austen Arnaud's** father, **John**, was a three-year starter in the secondary from 1980-82
- Defensive tackle **Nate Frere's** brother, **Nick**, is a defensive end for the Cyclones.
- Linebacker **Matt Leaders'** father, **Mike**, was an All-Big Eight linebacker, and his brothers, **Nick** and **Andy**, played on the defensive line.
- Cornerback **Devin McDowell** is the brother of Cyclone star **DeAndre Jackson**.
- Defensive lineman **Patrick Neal's** father, **Brian**, played offensive line at ISU and his brother, **John**, was a recent member of the basketball team.

If that's not enough, tight end **Ben Lamaak** has a cousin who played golf, an aunt who played basketball and an uncle who played baseball at ISU.

Whew.

- Defensive tackles are lucky to get footballs in their hands with the chance to run. Senior **Brent Curvey** has seen lightning strike three times (two fumbles, one interception), and he has scored every time. Is there any way the 305-pounder does it again?

"If I can. I'm trying to finish out my senior year with a bang," he said.

- ISU's assistant coaches are getting a 6.3 percent pay raise, although their salaries still are on the low end among their Big 12 Conference peers. Coach **Dan McCarney** annually pushes for his staff to be compensated better, saying it's the only way to keep them in Ames. His nine-member staff will be paid a combined \$1.22 million.

- Bookend tight ends **Ben Barkema** and **Walter Nickel** last season combined for 38 catches and 507 yards, the highest number of yards out of the position since 1976.

- Iowa State's defense has had a nose for the ball over the past couple of seasons.

Last year, the Cyclones forced a whopping 35 turnovers, including 22 interceptions, both marks easily the most in the Big 12. ISU ranked seventh nationally in turnover margin at plus-14.

The number could have been even higher — at least half of quarterback **Bret Meyer's** 10 interceptions came off tipped passes.

(7-5, 4-4)

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Meyer	12	138.94	368	227	10	61.7	2876	19	63	239.7

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
S. Hicks	9	149	572	27	545	3.7	4	37	60.6
Coleman	10	116	433	14	419	3.6	2	28	41.9
Kock	12	54	129	0	129	2.4	13	8	10.8

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Flynn	12	56	624	11.1	3	42	52.0
Blythe	12	51	1000	19.6	9	63	83.3
Davis	12	41	319	7.8	2	16	26.6

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Dobbins 103, Robertson 103, Berryman 72

Interceptions: Jackson 5, Hicks 5, Moser 4

Sacks: Berryman 7.5, Curvey 6.5, Leaders 5.5, Moorehead 5.5

Tackles for loss: Leaders 11.5, Berryman 11, Curvey 8.5

Results

W	Illinois State	32-21
W	Iowa	23-3
W	at Army	28-21
L	at Nebraska	20-27
L	Baylor	13-23
L	at Missouri	0T 24-27
W	Oklahoma State	37-10
W	at Texas A&M	42-14
W	Kansas State	45-17
W	Colorado	30-16
L	at Kansas	0T 21-24
	Houston Bowl	
L	TCU	24-27



ty to jam up the backfield and put pressure on the quarterback is a question mark without dismissed defensive end Jason Berryman.

ISU may be forced to blitz more, which is fine by linebacker Alvin Bowen. One of two new starters in the middle of the defense, Bowen showed last season he was capable of getting to the quarterback.

Michigan State transfer Tyrone McKenzie and sophomore Adam Carper are the other two linebackers. McKenzie

played at MSU as a true freshman and figures to be the Cyclones' biggest impact newcomer on defense.

In the secondary, all-conference candidate DeAndre Jackson is the lone holdover from a starting group that totaled 16 interceptions last year. Jackson had five of those. Sophomore Chris Singleton projects as the starter at the other cornerback spot.

Redshirt freshman James Smith has coaches excited he has a hold on the No. 1 strong safety position. Smith is at his best in run support and is a fine tackler. Pass defense is where his biggest improvement must come.

Playing time on the defensive line and in the defensive backfield will be up for grabs when fall practice begins. Newcomers could play their way into backup roles right away.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Among the biggest losses are ISU's No. 1 punter, kickoff man and deep snapper.

Place-kicker Bret Culbertson is back for his third season. The former walk-on has been accurate on field goals (20 of 26) and PATs (50 of 50), but needs to be more reliable with pressure kicks.

Freshman walk-on Michael Brandtner takes over the punting duties, while newcomer Matt Purvis has been recruited as the starting deep snapper. Purvis is the first incoming snapper awarded a scholarship in McCarney's 12 seasons.

DeAndre Jackson averaged 24.6 yards

The **BEST** & The **BRIGHTEST**

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Bret Meyer

Had a good freshman season then blossomed last year as a sophomore with 2,876 yards and 19 touchdowns while completing 62 percent of his passes. ... With the top-tier quarterbacks in the Big 12 (Vince Young, Reggie McNeal, Brad Smith, Cody Hodges, Joel Klatt) gone from their teams, Meyer could cruise to first-team All-Big 12 status. ... Earned honorable mention all-league honors in 2005. ... Had three games with at least 300 yards passing.



EMERGING STAR

DE Collins Eboh

Junior college recruit is in his second go-around with the Cyclones, playing in seven games as a true freshman before being an academic casualty. ... Returning to the team after attending North Iowa Area Community College, the 6-4, 250-pounder gives ISU's defense much-needed experience, not to mention the physical presence he'll provide rushing the passer in the absence of star DE Jason Berryman. ... Had five sacks in seven games last season in junior college.



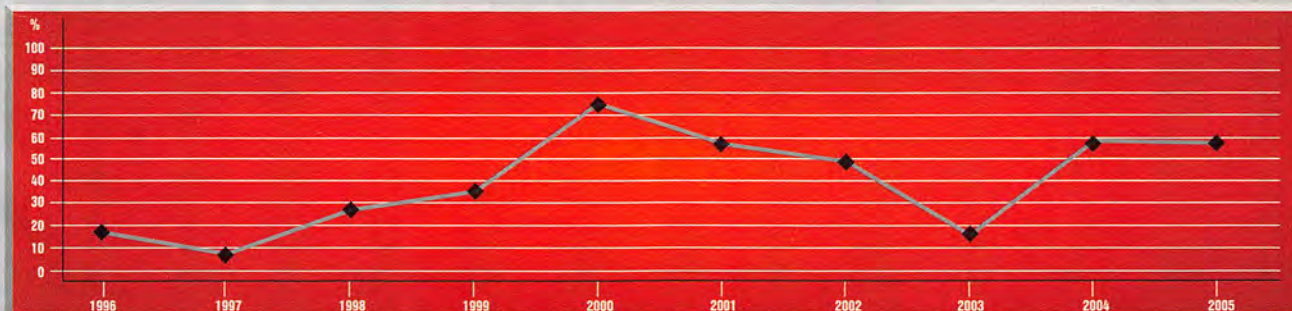
TOP NEWCOMER

WR Marquis Hamilton

Redshirt freshman nearly played right out of the chute. Coaches held him out to maximize his time in Ames. ... He won't be the feature guy with a bevy of veterans in front of him, but this big-bodied wideout (6-3, 217) from Oklahoma City could make the Sooners and Cowboys wish they'd made more of an effort to hold onto him. ... Earned all-state honors as a high school senior.



Iowa State's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

RYAN KOCK



Photo by Ned Dishman/Getty Images

Failed Switch a Score for ISU

Stuck at a position on the endangered species list, fullback Ryan Kock was moved from fullback to defensive end during the spring of 2005.

Coaches wanted to find a spot for a player with strength, toughness and natural football ability.

One thing, though. The experiment failed.

Good thing, too.

Kock went back to his old position and had the most productive season ever for an ISU fullback. His 13 touchdowns — on just 54 carries

— were the most from a Cyclone running back since 2001.

What could Kock have done at defensive end? Nothing close to what he ended up doing on the other side of the ball.

"It was a shot. It worked out," he said of the failed move to defense. "I think it made me a more physical player."

The 6-1, 240-pounder from tiny Lohrville, Iowa, was at a loss to explain his fantasy football owner's dream season of 2005.

Kock had a combined 11 carries for 37 yards in his first two seasons. He ended up scoring the game-winning touchdown in Iowa State's 17-13 Independence Bowl victory over Miami (Ohio) to end the 2004 season, just the start of a most unexpected scoring streak.

He totaled three touchdowns in a heartbreaking loss at Missouri and two each in wins over Illinois State, Army and Kansas State last season.

"I'm just going to keep doing what I do," Kock said. "I'm trying to build on it and take it into this year."

Opponents were well aware of his role when he entered the game in short-yardage and goal-line situations. Defenses would call out his No. 31, yell out to watch the fullback and point in his direction — yet no one could stop it.

Rarely is Kock the decoy. If he's in, he's getting the ball.

He almost always delivered a score or kept the chains moving.

"It's all up to the offensive line with what I do. If they keep opening holes, hopefully (all the success) happens again," he said.

During the spring, Kock practiced some in one-back sets. He's not likely to be utilized much in that formation in games, but he is a deceptively quick runner, and his blocking has never been a weakness.

"If there's anything else they want me to do I'm going to do it," he said.

Except going back to the defensive line.

per kick return, second-best in the Big 12. ISU's punt return game slowed to a halt after Ryan Baum (11.8-yard average on nine returns) injured his knee halfway through last year, but he will figure into the mix again this season.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

If there is a tougher slate around, Cyclone players and coaches would like to see it. Nine of the 12 games feature opponents who played in a bowl game last season. Getting to a sixth bowl in seven years is going to be a challenge.

"It's really a season of opportunity as far as I look at it," McCarney said.

"These guys all joined me here knowing we get to coach and play against the best in college football."

ISU opens with Toledo at home on a Thursday night. The most difficult stretch begins Sept. 16 with a road game at Iowa. From there, ISU plays at Texas, plays host to Northern Iowa and Nebraska, goes to Oklahoma and returns home to play Texas Tech.

— Eric Petersen

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31	TOLEDO
Sept. 9	UNLV
Sept. 16	at Iowa
Sept. 23	at Texas
Sept. 30	NORTHERN IOWA
Oct. 7	NEBRASKA
Oct. 14	at Oklahoma
Oct. 21	TEXAS TECH
Oct. 28	at Kansas State
Nov. 4	KANSAS
Nov. 11	at Colorado
Nov. 18	MISSOURI



MUSTANGS

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AT A GLANCE

2005

5-6 overall, 4-4 C-USA (T-3rd, West)

COACH

Phil Bennett — At SMU and overall:
12-34, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS

14; 8 offense, 6 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB DeMyron Martin, WR Bobby Chase,
WR Reynaldo Pellerin, DT Adrian
Haywood, DE Justin Rogers, SS Joe
Sturdivant

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

SMU's 4-3 defense was second toughest in Conference USA against the run last year and the front should still be excellent. The running back and receiver positions are well stocked, and three returning starting offensive linemen should bolster a unit plagued by inconsistency last season.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The Ponies are unproven at QB, with leading candidate Justin Willis just a redshirt freshman. In the secondary, SMU has three holes to fill (but has a wealth of worthy candidates).

KEY LOSSES

QB Jerad Romo, K Chris McMurtray,
P Ryan Mentzel, LB D.D. Lee, DB Alvin
Nnabuife, DB Rolando Humphrey

OVERVIEW

Things are looking up at SMU. The Mustangs finished 5-6 last season, beat three bowl teams and had their first three-game winning streak since 1999. What's next? The Ponies would like this to be their first winning season since 1997 and to make their first bowl game since 1984. If things go right, both could happen.

Pony Up: It's Time for Mustangs to Get to a Bowl

OFFENSE

SMU's offense returns eight starters, many at the skill positions.

RB DeMyron Martin, Conference-USA All-Freshman in 2005, heads the list. He had four 100-yard games and 854 total yards.

Backups include Johnnie Fitzgerald and Fred Turner, both of whom had good spring games. Others include Jessie Henderson, James Mapps and Cedrick Dorsey.

The entire wide receiver corps returns, including Bobby Chase, the team's offensive MVP last season. The 6-4 senior caught 39 passes for 625 yards and four TDs.

Ryan Kennedy returns at tight end, where sophomore Vincent Chase, Bobby's brother, will also play.

Quarterback is the big question mark.

Starter Jerad Romo is gone, but redshirt freshman Justin Willis used an impressive spring (16 of 21 in the spring game) to become the starter heading into the fall.

Redshirt freshman Eric Johnson and junior college transfer Corey Slater also played well in spring drills and could be factors for the starting job.

Three offensive line starters return, which should improve last year's inconsistent attack. SMU was first in C-USA in red zone offense, but it wasn't enough to prevent close losses — four of the six defeats were by seven points or less.

DEFENSE

The Ponies, who again will run the 4-3, return six starters from a group that ranked sixth in C-USA in total defense and was second best against the run.

Wilton McCray is back at linebacker (71 tackles in 2005), joined by potential playmaker Reggie Carrington, who moves to first-team. Pete Fleps and Paul Hiemenz will split time at the other linebacker spot.

Tackle Adrian Haywood, a junior college transfer, came on strong at the end of the year, with 11 tackles for loss in the last five games. He earned third-team all-league honors, with end Justin Rogers taking home second-team honors with a league-high seven sacks.

Nose guard Brandon Bonds and end Corey Muse will also contribute while Chris Parham, Dominic Pryor and Troy Therien, all earned high marks in spring practice and will play.

Only all-conference safety and leading tackler Joe Sturdivant returns in the secondary. Randall Goode and Bryce Hudman will step in at free safety while Cortley Blackmon, David Haynes, L.J. Johnson, Jonathan Lindley and Devin Lowery vie for the two corner spots.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Mustangs lost their kicker and punter. Thomas Morestead is penciled in to handle both duties, but he will be pushed by Andrew Galloway at punter. Other potential options at kicker are Kellis Cunningham, Brayden Harris and Ryan Wolcott.

Blake Warren is back to again return punts and C-USA All-Freshman selection Jessie Henderson again will return kick-offs.

— Steve Hunt



KANSAS

JAYHAWKS

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AT A GLANCE

2005

7-5 overall, 3-5 Big 12 (5th, North)

COACH

Mark Mangino — At Kansas and overall:
19-29, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS

12; 7 offense, 3 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB Jon Cornish, CB Aqib Talib, WR Brian
Murph, DT James McClinton, TE Derek Fine

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

A slowly rising program is continuing to improve its talent base, which means added depth across the board. Jon Cornish is an explosive running back, and if a quarterback steps up, the offense could improve significantly.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Though full of promise, the defense lacks the leadership and experience that made it so good in 2005. Freshman quarterbacks could top the depth chart, possibly making the position a shaky one during the nonconference stretch.

KEY LOSSES

LB Nick Reid, DE Charlton Keith,
CB/PR Charles Gordon, LB Kevin Kane,
QB Jason Swanson.

OVERVIEW

A lot of leadership is gone from a strong 2005 senior class, but plenty of schedule strength went away, too, with the Big 12 South rotation kicking in and Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech leaving the Jayhawks' slate. An eight-win season is a good goal to shoot for, but with the inexperience, just a winning season would be a fine accomplishment.

Mangino Confident Encore Won't Disappoint

The Kansas Jayhawks are winners.

A full decade has passed since that could be said, all the way back to Glen Mason's 10-2 team in 1995. But under the tutelage of coach Mark Mangino, the 2005 Jayhawks survived a dreadful mid-season funk, won four of their last five games and finished 7-5 — winners at last, after all these years.

Mangino, without solicitation or hesitation following KU's 42-13 victory over Houston in the Fort Worth Bowl, labeled the 2005 Jayhawks as the team that laid the foundation for his grand vision of the program.

"They led us to a winning season for the first time at KU in 10 years, a bowl victory," Mangino said that night. "And you all know all the great things these kids have done leading up to this game."

The problem?

Most of those blue-collared workers are gone, either forced out by eligibility or lured away by NFL dreams. Senior experience, on defense at least, is an endangered species. The exodus created question marks in many facets of KU's game.

Regardless, Mangino, in his fifth season, seems remarkably calm about what could be construed as a rebuilding year in several areas.

From the pessimist viewpoint, the departure of Nick Reid, Charles Gordon, Charlton Keith and many others on defense equals irreplaceable lost talent. For Mangino, it means newfound opportunity for a slew of young players he

recruited to Lawrence.

"It's going to get much better," defensive tackle James McClinton said. "We're going to keep improving. Guys are going to get the defense down, get the technique down, and we're going to be good."

While experience and leadership take a hit, the Jayhawks' Big 12 Conference schedule finally stops punching Kansas in the gut. South Division powers Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech — will not play the Jayhawks until 2008. Kansas' eight conference games will be against teams that went a combined 46-43 last season. The big three Kansas avoids was 28-6.

There is reason to hope — and reason to doubt. But such torn outlooks are a welcome sight for what once was a punching-bag program. Until recently, the doubt flourished, and hope was something exclusive to the KU basketball team.

Now the football team is a winner again, and expectations are slowly rising.

OFFENSE

It appears Kerry Meier is the man to lead the offense, but his label as a freshman is enough to lace the optimism with caution.

Though full of talent, pedigree and an ability to run and pass, Meier's capabilities won't be known until he performs in a game situation. He was plenty good in the spring game, completing 16 of 28 passes for 184 yards



Jon Cornish Photo by Steve Beyer



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 134.0 ypg rushing (7th in Big 12/75th in NCAA), 195.7 yards passing (10th/88th), 329.7 ypg total offense (9th/88th), 22.4 ppg (10th/83rd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Kerry Meier	Fr.	Bloodlines: three brothers played in college, one in NFL.	Adam Barmann, Sr.
RB	Jon Cornish*	Sr.	Explosive back will get bulk of carries.	Angus Quigley, Fr.
FB	Brandon McAnderson*	Jr.	Solid starter lacking competition.	Nick Kurtenbach, Jr.
WR	Brian Murph*	Sr.	Has increased playmaker responsibilities this year.	Marcus Herford, So.
WR	Dominic Roux	Sr.	Playmaker had clutch TD reception vs. Iowa State in '05.	Dexton Fields, So.
TE	Derek Fine*	Jr.	Solid receiving option had 22 catches last season.	Marc Dierking, Jr.
LT	Cesar Rodriguez*	Jr.	Has extensive experience at both tackle spots.	Rameses Arceo, Jr.
LG	Jake Cox	Sr.	Could assume role from banged up Whitaker.	Bob Whitaker, Sr.*
C	David Ochoa*	Sr.	Experienced leader is the offensive team captain.	Ryan Cantrell, So.
RG	Ryan Cantrell*	So.	Performed well in KU's late-season flurry.	Travis Dambach, Sr.
RT	Anthony Collins	So.	Great size and athleticism; could shine.	Adrian Mayes, So.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 83.25 ypg rushing (1st in Big 12/3rd in NCAA), 220.0 ypg passing (8th/59th), 303.3 ypg total defense (2nd/11th), 22.0 ppg (5th/28th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Rodney Allen	Sr.	Versatile; can play anywhere on the line.	Caleb Blakesley, Fr.
DT	James McClinton*	Jr.	Called "unblockable" by KU center David Ochoa.	Todd Haselhorst, So.
DT	Wayne Wilder	Sr.	Has a thick body able to close holes.	Eric Butler, Sr.
DE	Paul Como	Sr.	Pass-rush specialist finished strong in 2005.	John McCoy, Sr.
LB	Joe Mortensen	So.	Hard hitter with linebacker attitude.	Brandon Duncan, Fr.
LB	Mike Rivera	So.	Best athlete among the new starting linebackers.	Jake Schermer, Fr.
LB	Eric Washington	Sr.	Speedster was a juco All-American as a sophomore.	James Holt, So.
CB	Aqib Talib*	So.	Rising star could be one of Big 12's best.	Raymond Brown, So.
CB	Blake Bueltel	Jr.	Needs to bulk up, but has Big 12 tools.	Mike McCoy, Jr.
SS	Jerome Kemp*	Sr.	Undersized (5-10, 200), but a fearless hitter.	Tang Bacheyie, So.
FS	Darrell Stuckey	Fr.	Natural athlete ready for starting role.	Justin Thornton, Fr.

*Returning starter

and three touchdowns, also running for a score.

If he's not ready, Adam Barmann has enough talent to be serviceable until it's time to pass the torch.

Fortunately for Meier, he has experience all around his pocket. Four starters from the offensive line return, as well as tight end Derek Fine, running back Jon Cornish, fullback Brandon McAnderson and wide receiver Brian Murph.

"It takes 11 players to make an offense run," said Meier, brother of Kansas State quarterback Dylan Meier. "I know I've got 10 quality guys around me that will help me when the tough gets going. I believe in them."

KU's offensive line has the potential to be strong, though its size isn't imposing.

Seven players on the depth chart started at least one game last year, including season-long starters David Ochoa, Bob Whitaker and Cesar Rodriguez. Ryan Cantrell started the last five games, in which KU went 4-1, and Anthony Collins looks to be ready for duties at right tackle.

As for the skill positions, KU's backfield is ready for an encore.

Cornish (780 yards, 11 total touchdowns) was offensive team MVP last year, and McAnderson gradually is running the ball more to go with his proven blocking skills.

Fine is a real weapon at tight end, though receiving options past Murph (33 catches, 368 yards) have something to prove.

DEFENSE

KU had one of the toughest defenses in the nation last year, completely smothering against the run and dotted with playmakers like Nick Reid, Charlton Keith and Charles Gordon. This year's version, with only three starters returning, has a vastly different makeup.

Many of those floating to the top of the depth chart will do so without much experience.

"I don't think you immediately plug in young kids where you have had veteran players and play well right off the bat," Mangino said. "What we expect them to do is play smart football, good fundamental football, and as time goes on, they'll be better."

James McClinton, a thick defensive



Anthony Webb, CB

Webb is the type of player that Kansas never used to get. The 6-1, 190-pound four-star cornerback committed to the Jayhawks early in the process and stuck to his pledge, despite repeated attempts to get him to look around.



Donte Bean, RB

Bean could be a nice sparkplug for the Kansas offense because he can be used in a number of different ways. As a talented baseball prospect that could someday get drafted, Bean does have soft hands and knows how to catch the ball out of the backfield.



Jake Sharp, RB

Sharp was the top player in the state of Kansas. He shattered about every running back record in the state on the way to leading his team to the Class 5A championship. As a senior, he rushed for 3,304 yards and 57 touchdowns. He could be used on special teams at Kansas, but look for him to star somewhere.



Sal Capra, LB

Capra will remind a lot of KU fans of several of the linebackers that helped them have one of the best defenses in the nation in 2005. Capra won't be flashy, and he's not the fastest kid around (4.8 in the 40-yard dash), but he makes a lot of plays and is a real heady prospect. KU defensive coordinator Bill Young knows how to push the right buttons with talented linebackers and look for him to do that with Capra.

Commitments	25
Average Stars	2.72
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	1
★★★☆☆	16
★★☆☆☆	8
Total Stars	68
National Rank: 38	CONF: 7

2007 NEEDS

Mark Mangino is a former offensive line coach, so look for the Hawks to continue to beef up along the offensive line. Defensive tackle will also be a major priority for KU in 2007, along with more help at receiver. A kicker will also be needed.

NAME	POS.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ARCEO, Rameses	OL	6-4, 310	★★★★	Norwalk, CA	Cerritos College
Played guard and tackle last season. ... All-Conference. ... Graduated from Whittier (Calif.) St Paul.					
BEAN, Donte	RB	5-9, 180	★★★★	Rowlett, TX	North Garland
Rivals.com's No. 15 all-purpose back. ... No. 94 recruit in Texas. ... Rushed 191 times for 968 yards and 12 touchdowns.					
BUELTEL, Blake	DB	6-1, 180	★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler CC
Had two sacks and 33 tackles last season. ... All-League at Topeka (Kan.) Hayden. ... Enrolled for spring semester.					
CAPRA, Sal	LB	6-3, 236	★★	Kansas City	Rockhurst
Rivals.com's No. 19 recruit in Missouri. ... First-team All-State. ... Led school to three consecutive district titles.					
DEDEAUX, Bradley	TE	6-2, 238	★★★★	Midwest City, OK	Midwest City
Rivals.com's No. 40 tight end. ... No. 15 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Caught 47 passes for 809 yards and 12 touchdowns in last two seasons.					
GREENE, Jamal	DE	6-4, 255	★★★★	Kansas City	Washington
Rivals.com's No. 57 strongside defensive end. ... No. 3 recruit in Kansas. ... Had four sacks and 63 tackles as a senior.					
INGRAM, Tertavian	WR	6-1, 175	★★★★	Tampa, FL	Jefferson
Rivals.com's No. 91 recruit in Florida. ... Caught 66 passes for 1,105 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior. ... Averaged 20.6 yards per catch as a junior.					
JONES, Marc	TE	6-4, 240	★★★★	Kilgore, TX	Kilgore College
Signed with East Carolina after graduating Norfolk (Va.) Lake Taylor in 2004. ... Enrolled for spring semester.					
LANG, D'Marcus	ATH	6-3, 200	★★★★	Scurry, TX	Scurry-Rosser
Rivals.com's No. 56 athlete. ... No. 89 recruit in Texas. ... All-State honorable mention running back. ... Rushed for 1,365 yards and 12 touchdowns on 210 carries as a senior. ... Also passed for 516 yards.					
LAWRENCE, Tyler	QB	6-2, 198	★★	Shawnee, KS	Mission West
Rivals.com's No. 4 recruit in Kansas. ... Threw for more than 2,500 yards and rushed for 1,230 in three years on the varsity. ... Accounted for 40 touchdowns. ... All-State.					
LEWIS, Dakota	LB	6-0, 191	★★	Sulphur, OK	Sulphur
Rivals.com's No. 25 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Had 174 tackles as a senior. ... All-State. ... Topped 150 tackles in each of three varsity seasons.					
MARSHALL, John	OL	6-2, 272	★★	Mt. Vernon, TX	Mt. Vernon
All-State honorable mention as a senior. ... Second team All-State as a junior. ... Advanced to state golf tournament as a junior.					

NAME	POS.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
MCCOY, Mike	DB	5-11, 175	★★★★	San Bernardino, CA	Valley CC
Had two interceptions and 10 pass deflections in six games in 2005. ... Had 400 rushing yards, 300 receiving yards and three interceptions as a senior at Palmdale (Calif.) Highland.					
OGUNTODU, Olaitan	DB	6-1, 200	★★★★	Mesquite, TX	Horn
Rivals.com's No. 29 safety. ... No. 70 recruit in Texas. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... Had 86 tackles as a senior. ... Forced five fumbles as a junior.					
ONYEGBULE, Maxwell	LB	6-4, 215	★★★★	Arlington, TX	Arlington
Rivals.com's No. 59 outside linebacker. ... Second-team All-State. ... Had 141 tackles and nine sacks as a senior.					
RAMBO, Xavier	WR	5-11, 185	★★	Dallas	South Oak Cliff
Two-time first-team All-District. ... Played on the varsity as a freshman. ... Also ran track.					
REESING, Todd	QB	6-0, 180	★★★★	Austin, TX	Lake Travis
Rivals.com's No. 16 dual-threat quarterback. ... Passed for 3,342 yards and 41 touchdowns. ... Also rushed for 756 yards and eight touchdowns. ... Threw 70 touchdown passes to only 14 interceptions in two seasons. ... Enrolled for spring semester.					
SHARP, Jake	RB	5-10, 173	★★★★	Salina, KS	Central
Rivals.com's No. 17 all-purpose back. ... No. 1 recruit in Kansas. ... Rushed for 3,304 yards as a senior. ... Set a Kansas record with 63 touchdowns. ... Rushed for 6,524 career yards, No. 2 in state history.					
STROZIER, Phillip	DB	6-0, 185	★★★★	Kansas City	Rockhurst
Rivals.com's No. 39 cornerback. ... No. 9 recruit in Missouri. ... Two-time first-team All-State.					
TERRY, Jeremy	DB	6-1, 185	★★	Belle Glade, FL	Glades Central
Also played wide receiver and linebacker. ... Helped team to three consecutive district championships.					
THOMPSON, Jason	DE	6-6, 242	★★★★	Dallas	James Madison
Rivals.com's No. 56 strongside defensive end. ... Second team All-State. ... Led team with 82 solo tackles as a senior. ... Had 11 sacks as a senior.					
WEBB, Anthony	DB	6-1, 190	★★★★	Dallas	Glenn Heights
Rivals.com's No. 23 cornerback. ... No. 37 recruit in Texas. ... All-State honorable mention. ... Intercepted six passes as a senior.					
WHITE, John	DT	6-3, 275	★★	Moore, OK	Moore
Had seven sacks in seven games as a senior. ... All-State honorable mention.					
WILSON, Carl	OL	6-4, 270	★★★★	Redlands, CA	East Valley
Rivals.com's No. 51 offensive guard. ... Two-time first-team All-County.					
WOLFE, Ian	OL	6-6, 270	★★★★	Fort Collins, CO	Fort Collins
Rivals.com's No. 37 offensive tackle. ... No. 7 recruit in Colorado. ... First-team All-State. ... Two-time Academic All-State.					

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
92	RODNEY ALLEN	DE	6-3	280	Sr	Miami, FL	11	JONATHAN LAMB	WR	6-2	190	Sr	Lenexa
46	KAYL ANDERSON	LS	6-2	225	Fr	Tulsa, OK	87	JOHN LARSON	DE	6-3	240	So	Shawnee Mission
75	MARCUS ANDERSON	OL	6-4	285	Jr	Oakland, CA	76	MATT MANN	OL	6-4	290	Sr	Norman, OK
67	RAMESES ARCEO	OL	6-4	295	Jr	Whittier, CA	95	MATHEW MATTE	TE	6-2	230	Fr	Albuquerque, NM
87	SAM ARCHER	FB	6-1	220	Fr	McPherson	66	ADRIAN MAYES	OL	6-3	300	So	Manhattan
14	LUKE ARNDT	CB	5-10	180	So	Emporia	35	BRANDON McANDERSON	RB	6-0	235	Jr	Lawrence
36	TANG BACHEYIE	RB	6-1	195	So	Windsor, Ontario	93	JAMES McCLINTON	DL	6-1	283	Jr	Garland, TX
7	ADAM BARMANN	QB	6-4	210	Sr	Weston, MO	97	JOHN MCCOY	DL	6-3	250	Sr	Richwood, OH
94	CALEB BLAKESLEY	DL	6-5	277	Fr	Ottawa	31	MICHEAL MCCOY	DB	5-11	185	Jr	Palmdale, CA
79	CHRIS BRANT	DL	6-3	285	Sr	Edmond, OK	10	KERRY MEIER	QB	6-3	210	Fr	Pittsburg
9	DANE BROADIE	K	6-0	180	Sr	Kansas City, MO	37	JOE MORTENSEN	LB	6-2	245	So	Oakland, CA
81	RUSSELL BRORSEN	TE	6-4	238	So	Stillwater, OK	27	SADIQ MUHAMMED	CB	6-0	190	Jr	Kansas City, MO
47	MICAH BROWN	WR	6-0	178	Fr	Kearney, NE	6	BRIAN MURPH, JR.	WR	6-1	190	Sr	Howardville, MO
38	RAYMOND BROWN	S	6-3	200	So	St. Louis, MO	74	DAVID OCHOA	OL	6-4	285	Sr	Houston, TX
23	BLAKE BUEITEL	CB	6-0	175	Jr	Topeka	44	OLAITAN OGUNTODU	S	6-0	200	Fr	Mesquite, TX
56	ERIC BUTLER	DL	6-2	300	Sr	Leawood	9	RAIMOND PENDLETON	WR	5-10	180	Fr	Garland, TX
11	LEONARD BYRD	DB	6-0	176	Fr	Flossmoor, IL	22	ANGUS QUIGLEY	RB	6-2	210	Fr	Cleburne, TX
50	RYAN CANTRELL	OL	6-3	285	So	Sugar Land, TX	5	TODD REESING	QB	5-11	190	Fr	Austin, TX
78	ANTHONY COLLINS	OL	6-6	285	So	Beaumont, TX	34	BRUCE RINGWOOD	RB	6-1	215	Jr	Blue Springs, MO
98	PAUL COMO	DE	6-2	248	Sr	Dana Point, CA	40	MIKE RIVERA	LB	6-3	250	So	Shawnee Mission
29	JON CORNISH	RB	6-0	205	Sr	New Westminster, B.C.	65	CESAR RODRIGUEZ	OL	6-7	286	Jr	La Puente, CA
64	JAKE COX	OL	6-5	295	Sr	Marengo, IA	60	JOSE RODRIGUEZ	OL	6-6	255	Fr	La Puente, CA
69	TRAVIS DAMBACH	OL	6-5	295	Sr	Jackson, MO	18	ZACH ROSS	QB	6-1	190	So	Niwot, CO
70	MATT DARTON	OL	6-6	305	So	San Diego, CA	80	DOMINIC ROUX	WR	5-11	175	Sr	Los Angeles, CA
22	KYLE DAVIS	P	5-10	178	Fr	Overland Park	58	JAKE SCHERMER	LB	6-2	200	Fr	Nixa, MO
96	MARC DIERKING	TE	6-2	205	Jr	Overland Park	19	BRIAN SEYMOUR	S	6-1	190	Jr	Lawrence
16	BRANDON DUNCAN	LB	6-1	206	Fr	Garland, TX	49	DEREK SPEARS	TE	6-3	215	So	Osborne
17	CHANCE FARRALL	QB	6-4	225	Jr	Shawnee Mission	25	DARRELL STUCKEY	DB	6-1	183	Fr	Kansas City
88	DEXTON FIELDS	WR	6-0	180	So	Dallas, TX	17	JACK SWAB	WR	6-1	185	Fr	Tulsa, OK
85	DEREK FINE	TE	6-3	245	Jr	Sallisaw, OK	3	AQIB TALIB	CB	6-2	180	So	Richardson, TX
82	JEFF FOSTER	WR	6-2	195	Jr	Cedar Rapids, IA	71	LUKE TEMPLIN	DL	6-2	240	Fr	Andover
4	GARY GREEN, II	RB	5-9	175	So	San Antonio, TX	2	KENNETH THOMPSON	CB	5-11	180	Sr	Grand Prairie, TX
61	IAN HANDSHY	LB	6-1	230	Fr	Lawrence	46	JUSTIN THORNTON	WR	6-1	185	Fr	St. Joseph, MO
49	ALEX HANSON	PK	6-0	180	Fr	Ankeny, IA	15	KYLE TUCKER	P	6-2	205	Jr	Katy, TX
72	TODD HASELHORST	DL	6-4	300	So	Olathe	33	ERIC WASHINGTON	LB	6-2	220	Sr	Detroit, MI
86	MARCUS HENRY	WR	6-4	200	Jr	Lawton, OK	39	SCOTT WEBB	K	5-11	180	Jr	Tulsa, OK
13	MARCUS HERFORD	WR	6-3	210	So	DeSoto, TX	84	JEFF WHEELER	DE	6-7	240	Fr	Houston, TX
12	JAMES HOLT	S	6-3	200	So	Altus, OK	77	BOB WHITAKER	OL	6-5	317	Sr	Mt. Lebanon, PA
54	ZACK HOOD	LS	6-2	255	Sr	Creston, IA	62	CHRIS WHITCHURCH	OL	6-3	285	Fr	Pembroke Pines, FL
15	JERMAINE HOUSE	CB	5-9	170	So	St. Louis, MO	91	WAYNE WILDER	DL	6-3	295	Sr	Forsyth, GA
16	HASSAN JOHNSON	WR	6-0	175	Jr	Kansas City	41	ARIST WRIGHT	LB	6-0	205	Fr	Houston, TX
24	JEROME KEMP	S	5-10	200	Sr	Wichita	53	MATT ZELENZAK	LB	6-0	215	So	Topeka
20	JOHN KOSKO	S	5-9	190	So	Emporia							
43	NICK KURTENBACH	RB	5-10	200	Jr	Lindsay, NE							

Kansas fans were briefly pumped about the return of senior safety **Rodney Harris**, who sat out 2005 to be home for personal reasons before deciding to return in time for spring drills.

But on the first day of padded practices, Harris made a routine tackle, got up and finished practice before going to the training room because of a crick in his neck. It turned out to be a serious vertebrae injury that required surgery. Harris' career is done.

"He sustained an injury that will need a lot of therapy and treatment," coach **Mark Mangino** said. "It's an injury that's set him back quite a ways. But he's going to be fine."

Harris was an honorable mention All-Big 12 pick in 2004, and had started out spring playing well. KU now gets a lot younger at free safety, likely turning to redshirt freshman **Darrell Stuckey**.

• A few other players saw limited action in spring drills for health reasons, including defensive tackle **Todd Haselhorst**, linebacker **Eric Washington** and running back **Gary Green II**. Mangino's policy is to not comment or speculate about injuries, but all three are expected to be ready for the season.

• KU appears to be gaining significantly in fan interest. The stands at Amon G. Carter Stadium for last season's Fort Worth Bowl were dominated by Jayhawks fans, who were rewarded with a 42-13 Kansas win over Houston. And a mid-spring scrimmage in nearby Topeka was attended by 2,500 fans — far more than any normal practice in past years would have drawn.

• Kansas secured funds in the offseason for a \$31 million football facility to be constructed near Memorial Stadium. It finally will put KU's facilities up to snuff with other schools in the Big 12, including rivals Kansas State and Missouri.

The facility, which athletic director Lew Perkins expects to be completed in July of 2008, will have weight rooms, meeting rooms, locker rooms, a training room and a practice field, among other amenities. The main benefactors were **Dana Anderson** and **Tom Kivisto**, a former KU basketball player.

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Swanson	6	110.96	190	105	10	55.3	1223	7	48	203.8
Luke	9	100.60	171	87	8	50.9	967	6	59	107.4

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Cornish	12	134	820	40	780	5.8	9	72	65.0
Green	12	153	685	21	664	4.3	2	39	55.3
McAnderson	12	22	103	1	102	4.6	1	15	8.5

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Simmons	12	44	631	14.3	4	50	52.6
Gordon	12	34	313	9.2	2	40	26.1
Murph	11	33	368	11.2	2	59	33.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Reid 112, Kane 80, Floodman 76
Interceptions: Baines 4, Fowler 3, three with 2
Sacks: Perkins 10, Keith 9, Reid 3
Tackles for loss: Keith 23, Reid 14, Kane 11, Perkins 11

(7-5, 3-5)

W	Florida Atlantic	30-19
W	Appalachian State	36-8
W	Louisiana Tech	34-14
L	at Texas Tech	17-30
L	at Kansas State	3-12
L	Oklahoma	3-19
L	at Colorado	13-44
W	Missouri	13-3
W	Nebraska	40-15
L	at Texas	14-66
W	Iowa State	OT 24-21
Fort Worth Bowl		
W	vs. Houston	42-13



Though many of the new key players weren't in the starting lineup last year, many did see significant snaps — including ends Paul Como and Rodney Allen, and linebacker Mike Rivera.

Rivera, in fact, could fill the tackle-machine role vacated by Reid, and he's bringing a few of his fellow sophomores with him. Joe Mortensen and James Holt — both special teams standouts in 2005 — will play plenty on defense this season, and all three have the chance to keep the linebacker spot a strength for KU.

"They set the bar high," Rivera said of last year's defense. "But that's good for us. It's going to bring our level up, and we'll play even better because of them."

The secondary is a bit of a mystery, as one cornerback spot and free safety will feature newcomers. Blake Bueltel, Mike McCoy and Darrell Stuckey could see extensive action in the defensive backfield.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kansas returns two reliable legs — kicker Scott Webb and punter Kyle Tucker.

While neither is All-American caliber at this stage, Tucker, a junior, was a Ray Guy Award semifinalist and has a booming leg good enough to give Kansas a great field-position weapon.

Webb, also a junior, is money from inside 40 yards and decent beyond. His heroics included a game-winning field

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Jon Cornish

Cornish emerged as the Jayhawks' top big-play threat in 2005, rushing for 5.8 yards per carry and nine touchdowns (two more receiving) while splitting carries with departed senior Clark Green. ... Logic says Cornish gets the brunt of the load now, but that's not a guarantee. Freshman Angus Quigley is an up-and-comer, and if he can provide a minimal dropoff, Cornish could split carries and continue as a special teams standout. Either way, he's in high demand.



EMERGING STAR

CB Aqib Talib

The only cornerback on KU's roster with any NCAA experience, Talib broke out last year to earn Freshman All-America honors by Rivals.com. ... He has great size and tremendous athleticism, and used it to intercept two passes and make 54 tackles in his first season. ... He's not established enough for quarterbacks to throw away from him, but opponents could find out the hard way what a jewel Talib is.



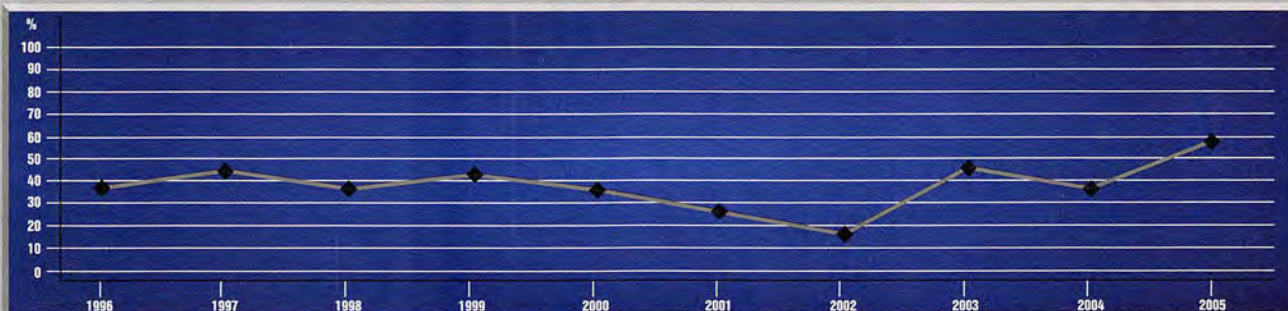
TOP NEWCOMER

QB Kerry Meier

With KU plagued by quarterback incompetence, Meier may have gotten the call as a true freshman last year had a heart condition in the preseason not set him back. Now healthy and with a full redshirt year in KU's system, Meier is about to show why he is perhaps the most anticipated recruit of the Mangino era. ... A dual-threat slinger with the potential to start four years at Kansas. ... Was the all-state quarterback as a senior at Pittsburg (Kan.) High.



Kansas' Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

DEREK FINE



Photo courtesy Kansas University

Taking Role Into His Own Hands

If there is a way Derek Fine can get the football more often this fall, the junior tight end thought of it long ago.

Heck, with a young, impressionable quarterback in Kerry Meier expected to take the reins of the Kansas offense, Fine is rubbing his hands at the potential of his own ideas.

"I might be real nice to him once in a while," Fine said with a grin. "Maybe buy him lunch, so he'll throw to me more."

It shouldn't come to that, judging by how reliable Fine was in 2005. Though often a third or fourth target as KU quarterbacks searched for receivers Charles Gordon and Mark Simmons last year, Fine still displayed a knack for catching anything thrown his way, barreling through defenders and picking up substantial gains.

And if Fine becomes a bigger part of the passing game with Gordon and Simmons gone, KU coach Mark Mangino said he will have earned it.

"He's an intense competitor and he brings a spark to the whole offense," Mangino said. "He's good at finding the open hole in the zone, and he's a physical blocker. If he gets his hands inside on you, he'll take you backwards."

Fine caught 22 passes last season — dropping his shoulder and dropping defensive backs after many of them — and rumbled to 244 receiving yards and a touchdown.

During the spring, Fine continued to refine his blocking, receiving and route-running skills.

"I'm trying to focus on my whole game," Fine said. "To me, there's never a time you can be totally satisfied. Footwork, hand placement, route running ... I'm just trying to improve my whole game."

Now the key is to get the game to go through him.

Outside of Brian Murph, KU's receiving options are talented yet unproven. Fine has little competition behind him at tight end, save signees like Bradley Dedeaux who won't show up until the summer. That makes Fine's role twofold: Get it done on the field, and get the other tight ends ready off of it.

"We've got some good tight ends behind me," Fine said. "But they don't have a whole lot of experience, so I'm trying to be the old man in the group."

It'll be a lot of work, and he'll also have to make sure he keeps a few dollars handy in case Meier gets hungry.

goal against Iowa State last year that sent Kansas to the Fort Worth Bowl.

One of KU's biggest holes to fill is the loss of juke-and-jive punt returner Charles Gordon, who left school for the NFL (although he wasn't drafted). Brian Murph, Aqib Talib and Jonathan Lamb are all options to replace him.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Kansas has added some challenge to its nonconference slate, with a Friday night road game at Toledo and a home contest against South Florida to go with I-AA Northwestern State and Sun Belt team Louisiana-Monroe.

A 3-1 nonconference mark should be the minimum expectation heading into Big 12 play. There, KU catches a break.

The Big 12 South schedule rotates, and Kansas will get Baylor, Oklahoma State and Texas A&M — two of them at home — while Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech, the top three in the South standings last season, go away until 2008. That could have a huge impact on how KU's season plays out.

— Ryan Wood

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 9	LOUISIANA-MONROE
Sept. 16	at Toledo
Sept. 23	SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 30	at Nebraska
Oct. 7	TEXAS A&M
Oct. 14	OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 21	at Baylor
Oct. 28	COLORADO
Nov. 4	at Iowa State
Nov. 18	KANSAS STATE
Nov. 25	at Missouri



TULSA

GOLDEN HURRICANE

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AT A GLANCE

2005

9-4 overall, 6-2 C-USA (1st, West)

COACH

Steve Kragthorpe — At Tulsa and overall: 21-17, 3 years

RETURNING STARTERS

17; 7 offense, 9 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Paul Smith, RB Tarrion Adams, WR Idris Moss, OT Jeff Perrett, DB Bobby Blackshire, LB Nick Bunting, CB Nick Graham, CB Roy Roberts

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Stability is a major strength, as 17 starters return from a squad that won the Conference USA championship and the Liberty Bowl. Most skill position players are back, including bowl MVP QB Paul Smith.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

All-American TE Garrett Mills and leading rusher Uril Parrish are gone, and defensive coordinator Todd Graham, a big reason for TU's success, left to become head coach at Rice.

KEY LOSSES

RB Uril Parrish, TE Garrett Mills, OL Jesse Stoneham, DB Bobby Klinck, DE Brandon Lohr, PK Brad DeVault

OVERVIEW

Tulsa started 0-2 last season before rebounding nicely — and surprisingly — with all four losses coming against bowl teams. With an easier nonconference slate, a slow start shouldn't be an issue, although BYU and Navy will be challenging in the first month. TU likely will go on to contend for the C-USA title and a second consecutive bowl game. The school's first 10-win season since 1991 is also within the realm of possibility.

Full Speed Ahead Toward Another C-USA Title OFFENSE

Good news is that the Golden Hurricane is coming off a 9-4 season in which it won the Conference USA championship and earned its first bowl victory since 1991.

Better news is that 17 starters return.

Quarterback Paul Smith, who threw for 2,847 yards and 20 touchdowns, with only six interceptions, is back. He leads seven returning starters for a Hurricane pro-set offense that averaged nearly 33 points and more than 400 yards per game in 2005.

At running back, Tarrion Adams (574 yards, 6.4 per carry) is the new starter, replacing Uril Parrish, who graduated. Brandon Diles will get carries, as will Courtney Tennial, an Oklahoma transfer.

Tennial, in search of more playing time after Adrian Peterson arrived in Norman.

Gone is All-American tight end Garrett Mills, last year's leading receiver, but Charles Ramsey, a part-time 2005 starter, steps in. Ted Curtis and Aaron Roupoli will also see snaps.

Idris Moss is the top returning receiver (22 for 236 yards) but the absence of Ashlan Davis, the team's second-leading pass catcher, looms large. Candidates to replace him include Ryan Bugg, Kyle Grooms, Cauvey Jackson, Donnie Johnson and Jesse Meyer.

As for the line, the list of four returning starters is led by tackle Jeff Perrett, who has started 35 consecutive games.

DEFENSE

Tulsa will again be strong on defense, where nine starters return. This includes

all three linebackers — 2005 leading tackler Nelson Coleman (117), two-time all-conference performer Nick Bunting and Chris Chamberlain.

The line remains intact except for departed end Brandon Lohr. At end, look for Chadd Evans, C-USA All-Freshman honoree Moton Hopkins, converted linebacker Kinny Spotwood and Robert Latu to compete for playing time. Juniors Brandon Jones and Walter Boyd ended spring atop the depth chart at nose guard.

Safety Bobby Klinck is the only other defensive starter to graduate.

First-team all-conference free safety Bobby Blackshire provides good pass coverage in Tulsa's 3-3-5 defense. Bandits Kedrick Alexander and Steve Craver missed most of 2005, but should be significant contributors, with Alexander in line to start. Junior Anthony Germany will start at a safety spot after a solid 2005.

Cornerback Nick Graham had a team-high six picks last season, and is joined by C-USA All-Freshman Roy Roberts.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Idris Moss has experience returning both punts and kickoffs and will step in to replace Ashlan Davis, who last year handled both return duties and had six kickoff returns for touchdowns in the past two seasons.

Punter Chris Kindred is back for a final year, but Tulsa needs a new kicker after the departure of Brad DeVault. The emergence in the spring of junior Jarrod Tracy apparently has solved that potential problem.

— Steve Hunt

WILDCATS

For more coverage of the Wildcats, visit www.kansasstate.rivals.com

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AT A GLANCE

2005

5-6 overall, 2-6 Big 12 (6th, North)

COACH

Ron Prince: At Kansas State and overall: 1st year

RETURNING STARTERS

19; 9 offense, 8 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WR Jordy Nelson, FS Marcus Watts, LB Brandon Archer, DE Blake Seiler, RB Thomas Clayton

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

There is a good fleet of wide receivers, capable running backs and an offensive line that could be quite strong up the middle. On defense, a versatile group of speedy linebackers and safeties could work well in the new Cover-2 scheme.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The defensive line is nearly a complete question mark, which could hamstring the defense no matter how well the linebackers and secondary play. There are four candidates at quarterback, but that does not guarantee finding one who will command the new West Coast offense.

KEY LOSSES

LT Jeromey Clary, LB Matt Butler, LB Ted Sims, WR Davin Dennis

OVERVIEW

With a new coach and no quarterback to count on, even the most rabid fan has limited expectations. If Prince can coax the Wildcats to a .500 record, that would be a positive. A bowl bid would satisfy everyone.

Hail Prince: K-State's New Era Brings Fresh Air

To nearly everyone, Bill Snyder simply was Kansas State football.

Snyder took over perhaps the worst college football program in the country and produced 11 bowl games, four division championships and a Big 12 title in 17 seasons.

Yet, K-State now moves on without its lead architect, and Snyder said the timing of his retirement was, in part, due to his belief that consecutive losing seasons would ease the pressure on his replacement.

That would be Ron Prince, who thinks too much can be made of a coaching change. That plays right into his theory that, in football, there is little or no carryover from season to season.

"One of the things that is misunderstood about sports is that the team is reborn every year," Prince said.

"With the amount of people who are leaving your roster, with the amount of players whose talents are ascending, some players' talents might be descending, and then the new players coming onto the team — it's impossible for the team to be the same team or even pick up or carry on from what's happened in the past."

That would be a positive for K-State, which won 11 games in six of seven seasons before going a combined 9-13 the past two seasons.

Almost to a man, the players glow about the fresh air now filling the program. Instead of the stoic, business-like approach that seemed to be a constant due to Snyder's legendary work ethic, there is a young, hip vibe that comes with

a coach who will still be 36 when the season starts.

Plus, Prince — one of five black head coaches in Division I-A — grew up 20 miles away in Junction City.

"He talks to us all the time," cornerback Justin McKinney said. "I just like the guy. I like seeing him. I like stopping by the office every day. I just like being at the complex when he's there."

On the field, Prince will bring an offensive background, having last served as Virginia's offensive line coach and offensive coordinator. He is installing a West Coast-style offense — if he can find a quarterback to run it.

Defensively, coordinator Raheem Morris, not yet 30, spent the past four seasons with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He plans on utilizing a Cover-2 system that is far different than the defense of K-State's glory years, when star corners playing man coverage allowed a wide variety of lethal blitzes.

There was not much to remember about K-State football before Bill Snyder. Prince and his staff are trying to ensure there will be something worth noting after Snyder.

OFFENSE

The Wildcats return four starters on the line, three experienced tailbacks and a deep corps of wide receivers, yet none of it seems to matter much until the quarterback situation pans out — if it does.

Four legitimate contenders spent time with the first unit in the spring.



Brandon Archer Photo by Scott Sewell/Icon SMI



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 138.4 ypg rushing (6th Big 12/68th NCAA), 201.4 ypg passing (9th/80th), 339.7 ypg total offense (8th/83rd), 26.3 ppg (7th/82nd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Dylan Meier	Sr.	Free-for-all continues; Meier was good in spring game.	A. Webb, Sr./A. Evridge, So.*
RB	Thomas Clayton*	Sr.	Florida State transfer had team-high 637 yards.	P. Fisher, So./C. Alsop, Sr.
WR	Jordy Nelson*	Jr.	Had eight of team's 15 receiving TDs last season.	Toney Coleman, Jr.
WR	Yamon Figurs*	Sr.	Burner averaged 17.4 yards on 14 catches.	Ro Grigsby, So.
WR	Jermaine Moreira	Sr.	91 career catches ... but yet to break out.	Val Taylor, Fr.
TE	Rashaad Norwood*	Jr.	Finally seems focused after 13-catch season.	N. Prater, Fr./B. Alstatt, So.
LT	Derek Meyer	Fr.	Impressive offseason has shot him up the depth chart.	Brad Rooker, So.
LG	Greg Wafford*	Sr.	A pleasant surprise last season, making 11 starts at RT.	Ryan Schmidt, So.
C	Jordan Bedore*	So.	Converted DL and former wrestler learned on the go.	John Hafferty, Jr.*
RG	Caleb Handy*	So.	If backup is healthy, could be competition here.	Matt Boss, So.
RT	Gerard Spexarth	So.	Massive and athletic, but injury prone so far.	Logan Robinson, Jr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 128.9 ypg rushing (6th Big 12/30th NCAA), 230.6 ypg passing (9th/74th), 359.5 total defense (8th/45th), 27.7 ppg (9th/74th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Blake Seiler*	Sr.	Surest thing among DL; could be needed at DT.	Eric Childs, Fr.
DT	Quintin Echols*	Sr.	A bullish clogger in the middle, though inconsistent.	Vlad Faustin, So.
DT	Alphonso Moran*	So.	Lack of depth forced him to the field last season.	Steven Cline, Jr.
DE	Ian Campbell	So.	Inexperienced speed rusher with a thin frame.	Moses Manu, Jr.
LB	Brandon Archer*	Sr.	Has started 20 straight on the strong side.	Ross Diehl, Fr.
LB	Zach Diles	Sr.	Brings good size/speed combo to the middle.	Greg Gaskins, Jr.
LB	Reggie Walker	So.	Tenacity and playmaking should earn starting nod.	Maurice Mack, Sr.*
CB	Bryan Baldwin*	Jr.	Steady presence started each game last season.	Byron Garvin, Jr.*
CB	Justin McKinney	Jr.	Impressive spring, including 4.34 40.	Kyle Williams, Sr.
SS	Kevin Hollis	Fr.	If Kyle Williams does move to CB, this spot wide open.	Devin Anderson, Jr.
FS	Marcus Watts*	Jr.	Converted WR a big hitter coming off hip injury.	Courtney Herndon, Fr.

*Returning starter

That includes seniors Dylan Meier and Allen Webb, who have a combined 16 career starts.

Meier did not play last season after undergoing surgery on a shoulder injured while he started the 2004 opener, an injury that dragged on throughout that season. Webb is athletic, but his inaccurate arm and lack of touch seem to be mismatched with the new West Coast-style offense.

The highest upside belongs to true freshman Josh Freeman, whom Prince talked out of a commitment to Nebraska. He was the No. 4-rated pro-style quarterback in the country according to Rivals.com, and left Kansas City (Mo.) Grandview High early to participate in spring drills. He has all the tools.

Another freshman in the mix this spring, Kevin Lopina, decided to transfer less than a week after the spring game.

Sophomore Allan Evridge earned most of the snaps last season, including six starts. His numbers — completing 47.9 percent of his passes while throwing for 1,365 yards, six touchdowns and seven interceptions — are indicative of his abilities. He's a steady presence, a smart player who doesn't get rattled.

That might be enough to earn him the first crack at the job.

Whoever plays quarterback will have tools to work with. Thomas Clayton and Parrish Fisher are potential stars at tailback. Clayton is a north-south runner with breakaway speed while Fisher has decent size but relies on his quick-

ness and vision.

Jordy Nelson is one of the Big 12's top returning wide receivers, and true freshman Nate Prater could quickly develop into a contributor at tight end.

While inexperienced tackles are a concern on the line, the middle three spots have talent and depth, led by bruisers Greg Wafford, Jordan Bedore and Caleb Handy.

DEFENSE

The Wildcats have fast, physical tacklers at linebacker and in the secondary. They might really need to be flying to the ball because the defensive line's odds of stopping anyone appear slim.

Blake Seiler, a former walk-on, is K-State's best defensive end, yet he might



Josh Freeman, QB

Freeman was the recruiting story of the year for the Wildcats. He was a long-time Nebraska commitment before Ron Prince was hired as the new coach at K-State. Prince made a run at Freeman, who was ranked as one of the nation's Top 100 players, and he eventually decided Manhattan — not Lincoln — was the place for him. Freeman's blessed as an athlete.



Josh Moore, CB

Moore was a guy that slipped through the rankings cracks and many schools overlooked him until late in the process when they discovered he was going to qualify academically. K-State made a strong run at him and got the pledge, despite Florida State offering him a scholarship.



Zach Kendall, DT

One of the top five players in Missouri was an original K-State pledge under the Bill Snyder staff and stuck with it until the end. A physical defensive player who should be a solid run stopper up the middle for the Wildcats.



Cedric Wilson, CB

Wilson, a junior college athlete from Garden City (Kan.) Community College played both cornerback and receiver in his junior college career. The Wildcats simply list him as an athlete, which means look for him to find a way to get his hands on the ball on special teams or receiver. Wilson, who is 6-1 and 185 pounds, has explosive speed and could find a way to become a gamebreaker somewhere on the field.

Commitments	28
Average Stars	2.57
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	2
★★★☆☆	12
★★★☆☆	14
Total Stars	72
National Rank: 41	Big 12: 8

2007 NEEDS

The Wildcats want to play faster under Prince, so look for more speed at receiver, running back and linebacker to remain a priority for K-State in 2007. More help along the offensive line will also be important.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ANDERSON, Devin	DB	5-9, 170	★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Tied for conference lead with seven interceptions. ... Had 42 solo tackles and blocked a punt.					
BALCOM, Brandon	DT	6-1, 280	★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
Had eight sacks last season. ... All-Conference honorable mention. ... Ranked fifth in the conference with 103 tackles.					
CARNEY, Chris	DB	6-1, 160	★★★	Denver	Mullin
Rivals.com's No. 48 cornerback. ... No. 13 recruit in Colorado. ... First-team All-State.					
CHEATHAM, Ray	DB	6-0, 185	★★★	Independence, KS	Independence CC
Rivals.com's No. 42 overall junior college prospect. ... Intercepted three interceptions last year.					
CREWS, Gabriel	DT	6-2, 297	★★	Lovejoy, GA	Lovejoy
Had 6.5 sacks as a senior. ... Three-year starter. ... Two-time All-Region. ... Had 20 career sacks.					
EDMOND, Courtney	DB	6-2, 220	★★★	Brenham, TX	Blinn College
Had two interceptions and a sack last year. ... Signed with Northwestern (La.) State out of high school. ... Intercepted five passes as a senior at LaMarque (Texas).					
FREEMAN, Josh	QB	6-6, 231	★★★★	Grandview, MO	Grandview
Rivals.com's No. 92 overall recruit. ... No. 4 pro-style quarterback. ... Top recruit in Missouri. ... Passed for more than 7,000 yards in high school. ... Completed 53 percent of his passes as a senior.					
GREER, Courtney	RB	5-10, 230	★★	Midland, TX	Christian
Rushed for 1,673 yards and 33 touchdowns as a senior. ... Averaged 7.3 yards per carry in 2005.					
HOULIK, John	ATH	5-10, 193	★★	Wichita, KS	Collegiate
Played running back and linebacker for three years. ... Three-year starter.					
JACKSON, Robert	DE	6-3, 265	★★★	Fort Scott, KS	Fort Scott CC
Rivals.com's No. 76 overall junior college prospect. ... Had six sacks in eight games. ... Two-time All-Conference in junior college. ... Had 12 sacks as a senior at West Haven (Conn.).					
JOHNSON, James	RB	5-11, 200	★★★★	Brenham, TX	Blinn College
Rivals.com's No. 9 overall junior college recruit. ... Rushed for 2,384 yards and 36 touchdowns in two junior college seasons. ... Averaged nearly 7.5 yards per carry.					
JOHNSON, Otis	DB	5-11, 185	★★	Aldine, TX	Eisenhower
Started at safety as sophomore and junior before moving to safety. ... Second team All-District.					
KENDALL, Zach	DT	6-4, 280	★★★	Harrisonville, MO	Harrisonville
Rivals.com's No. 45 defensive tackle. ... No. 5 recruit in Missouri. ... Helped Harrisonville to two state titles. ... Had nine sacks as a junior.					
KREBIEL, Scott	OL	6-7, 280	★★★	Pratt, KS	Pratt
Rivals.com's No. 51 offensive tackle. ... No. 2 recruit in Kansas. ... Also played defensive line. ... First-team All-State.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
MANU, Moses	DE	6-3, 250	★★★	Torrance, CA	El Camino College
Unanimous first-team All-Conference selection in 2005. ... Had 9.5 sacks in 2005. ... Played five games at tight end before switching to defensive end.					
MASTRUD, Jeron	TE	6-7, 250	★★	Beaverton, OR	Beaverton
Rivals.com's No. 8 recruit in Oregon. ... Also played quarterback and defensive end.					
MAYFIELD, Kenneth	OL	6-4, 299	★★	Randallstown, MD	Randallstown
Had 77 pancake blocks as a senior. ... Added 78 tackles from the defensive line.					
McGHEE, Davyon	LB	5-10, 208	★★	Houston	Langham Creek
Had 11 sacks as a senior. ... Moved from running back to linebacker after his junior year. ... First-team All-District.					
MOORE, Antwon	DB	6-0, 219	★★★	Miami, OK	N.E. Okla. A&M
Rivals.com's No. 95 overall junior college recruit. ... Averaged 38.3 yards per kickoff return as a senior.					
MOORE, Josh	DB	5-10, 166	★★	Pompano Beach, FL	Ely
Intercepted 10 passes as a junior. ... First-team All-County as a senior.					
PATTON, Leon	ATH	5-7, 174	★★★	Cedar Hill	White
Rivals.com's No. 61 athlete. ... Rushed for 1,309 yards and 11 touchdowns as a senior. ... Averaged 7.7 yards per carry in 2005.					
POOSCHKE, Michael	TE	6-3, 245	★★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
Rivals.com's No. 98 overall junior college recruit. ... Caught 22 passes for 291 yards last year.					
PURVIS, Tony	DB	6-0, 160	★★	McCook, NE	McCook
Rivals.com's No. 9 recruit in Nebraska. ... Three-year starter at cornerback. ... Two-year starter at quarterback.					
ROLAND, Justin	LB	6-2, 240	★★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
Led conference with 170 tackles as a senior. ... Added nine sacks in 2005. ... All-District as a senior at Ponca City (Okla.).					
SCHULTERS, Jamal	RB	5-8, 177	★★	Brooklyn, NY	Fork Union Military
All-State running back and defensive back. ... Rushed for 2,018 yards and 26 touchdowns as a senior.					
TURNER, Patrick	OL	6-4, 332	★★	Houston	Madison
Two-time first-team All-District. ... Three-time district and regional champion in shot put and discus.					
VIERS, Trevor	DT	6-5, 265	★★	Windom, KS	Little River
Played eight-man football in high school. ... Four-year starter in high school.					
WILSON, Cedric	ATH	6-1, 185	★★★	Garden City, KS	Garden City CC
Originally signed with Kansas State in 2004 out of Fort Pierce (Fla.) John Carroll. ... Intercepted five passes last season.					

WILDCATS SPRING ROSTER

NOTEBOOK

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
80	BRETT ALSTATT	TE	6-5	245	So	Hays	14	KEVIN LOPINA	QB	6-3	220	Fr	Pleasanton, CA
21	CARLOS ALSUP	RB	6-1	215	Sr	Liberal	78	ZACH LUCAS	OL	6-3	275	So	Sublette
32	DONNIE ANDERS	RB	5-10	190	Sr	Salina	24	MAURICE MACK	LB	6-0	215	Sr	Olathe
23	DEVIN ANDERSON	DB	5-10	185	Jr	Ponca City, OK	96	MOSES MANU	DE	6-3	260	Jr	Inglewood, CA
46	BRANDON ARCHER	LB	6-2	230	Sr	St. Paul, MN	88	JESSE MARTINEZ	WR	6-4	205	Sr	Napa, CA
90	J.D. BAHARAT	TE	6-6	275	Jr	Soldier	41	STEVE MATHIAS	LB	6-1	220	Jr	Partridge
3	BRYAN BALDWIN	DB	5-11	185	Jr	St. Louis, MO	28	JOHN MCCARDLE	RB	5-9	195	So	Omaha, NE
58	CHRIS BAMBERGER	LB	6-2	220	So	Jetmore	22	JUSTIN MCKINNEY	DB	5-10	185	Jr	Sanford, FL
79	JORDAN BEDORE	OL	6-3	275	So	Goodland	30	RIMMON MCNEESE	FB	6-2	240	Sr	Grandview, MO
31	BRICE BERNBECK	DB	6-0	180	Fr	Lakin	9	DYLAN MEIER	QB	6-3	210	Sr	Pittsburg
60	BRANDON BORTZ	LB	6-0	225	So	Preston	71	DEREK MEYER	OL	6-6	290	Fr	Campbell, NE
75	MATT BOSS	OL	6-4	310	So	Cherryvale	50	ALPHONSO MORAN	DT	6-1	290	So	Delray Beach, FL
21	COLE BROKENICKY	P	5-10	195	Jr	Manhattan	10	JERMAINE MOREIRA	WR	5-11	190	Sr	Palm Beach Gdns., FL
34	ANTONIO BROWN	WR	5-10	165	Fr	Mesquite, TX	62	JEFF MORTIMER	LS	6-0	225	Sr	Delphos
98	IAN CAMPBELL	DE	6-4	240	So	Cimarron	27	JORDY NELSON	WR	6-3	210	Jr	Riley
29	LUCAS CARPENTER	FB	6-1	235	Fr	Manhattan	89	RASHAAD NORWOOD	TE	6-5	240	Jr	Kansas City
90	ERIC CHILDS	DE	6-3	225	Fr	Arlington, TX	18	JARED PARKER	PK	6-0	180	So	Ankeny, IA
5	THOMAS CLAYTON	RB	6-0	220	Sr	Alexandria, VA	26	TERRY PETRIE	DB	5-9	185	Jr	Norton
99	STEVEN CLINE	DT	6-2	290	Jr	Palm Beach Gdns., FL	86	NATE PRATER	TE	6-4	265	Fr	Omaha, NE
25	TONEY COLEMAN	WR	6-2	190	Jr	Arlington, TX	87	DONALD RAYMER	WR	6-2	235	Sr	Goodland
91	CLAYTON COX	DE	6-3	240	Jr	Weskan	17	TIM REYER	P	6-0	195	Jr	Wamego
43	ROSS DIEHL	LB	6-2	220	Fr	Castle Rock, CO	84	ANDREW RICHARDS	WR	6-3	200	Fr	Keller, TX
52	ZACH DILES	LB	6-2	230	Sr	Tulare, CA	65	LOGAN ROBINSON	OL	6-9	310	Jr	Agra
62	JAKE DOUGHERTY	OL	6-2	275	Jr	New Castle, PA	68	BRAD ROOKER	OL	6-6	270	So	Omaha, NE
56	QUINTIN ECHOLS	DT	6-2	305	Sr	Fort Worth, TX	57	MACKENZIE ROSEL	LB	6-2	205	Fr	Liberal
30	ANDREW ERKER	DB	6-0	180	So	Olathe	39	PAT ROXAS	FB	6-0	240	Fr	Placentia, CA
25	SCOTT EVANS	DB	5-11	195	Fr	Andover	70	RYAN SCHMIDT	OL	6-5	290	So	Boca Raton, FL
12	ALLAN EVRIDGE	QB	6-1	210	So	Papillon, NE	26	TIM SCHWERDT	PK	5-8	166	Jr	Tecumseh
54	VLAD FAUSTIN	DE	6-4	250	So	Miami, FL	34	BLAKE SEILER	DE	6-3	245	Sr	Goddard
16	YAMON FIGURS	WR	6-0	185	Sr	Lakeland, FL	19	JEFF SNODGRASS	PK	6-2	200	Sr	Leawood
7	PARRISH FISHER	RB	5-10	205	So	Richardson, TX	73	GERARD SPEKARTH	OL	6-7	290	So	Colwich
1	JOSH FREEMAN	QB	6-6	230	Fr	Kansas City, MO	49	MITCH STRAUB	DE	6-3	240	So	Waterloo, NE
6	BYRON GARVIN	DB	5-10	180	Jr	Miramar, FL	64	NICK STRINGER	OL	6-6	260	Fr	Topeka
33	GREG GASKINS	LB	6-0	215	Jr	Manhattan	35	NOAH STROZIER	DB	6-0	180	Sr	Kansas City, MO
0	DANIEL GONZALEZ	WR	6-5	210	Jr	Augusta	29	ADRIAN STRYKER	DB	6-1	185	Fr	Valley Heights
45	COURTNEY GREER	RB	5-10	230	Fr	Midland, TX	33	PRESTON TAYLOR	WR	6-0	180	Jr	Gatesville, TX
85	RO GRIGSBY	WR	6-4	185	So	Dayton, OH	4	VAL TAYLOR	WR	6-1	180	Fr	Dallas, TX
72	JOHN HAFPERTY	OL	6-3	305	Jr	Alpharetta, GA	76	BROCK UNRUH	OL	6-5	305	Fr	Corpus Christi, TX
47	ADAM HAMILTON	DB	6-0	195	Sr	El Dorado	51	JACOB VOEGELI	OL	6-2	285	Jr	Wichita
69	CALEB HANDY	OL	6-1	305	So	Conway Springs	67	GREG WAFFORD	OL	6-2	305	Sr	Lancaster, TX
38	JORDAN HENRICKS	DB	6-2	190	Fr	Manhattan	53	REGGIE WALKER	LB	6-2	220	So	Sacramento, CA
63	JED HENSON	OL	6-4	320	Jr	Nickerson	2	MARCUS WATTS	DB	6-2	180	Jr	Hays
20	COURTNEY HERNDON	DB	5-11	200	Fr	Dallas, TX	8	ALLEN WEBB	QB	6-3	210	Sr	Denver, CO
15	KEVIN HOLLIS	DB	6-1	195	Fr	Gilmer, TX	9	KYLE WILLIAMS	DB	6-1	200	Sr	Pine Bluff, AR
35	GARRON HORNE	WR	5-10	170	Fr	Belfast, ME	81	MICAH WYATT	WR	5-10	175	Fr	Crossett, AR
14	TONY JONES	P	6-4	200	Fr	Defiance, MO	48	PETE YEMM	DE	6-3	230	So	Overland Park
40	TANER LITTON	LB	6-1	210	Fr	Beloit							

Defensive lineman **Blake Seiler** spent his first season of college as a wrestler at Oklahoma State before coming back to his original plan of walking on with the K-State football team.

Seiler was 13-8 in his one season at OSU, and coach **Ron Prince** thinks that background helps him on the football field.

"As a lineman, you have to have explosion and power," Prince said.

"Those are significant skills. You have to have ballast, contact balance, lateral quickness and a sense of how a person is trying to act against you. Those are skills that make you dominant, and we'll see this year if he's dominant."

• One of the biggest differences from the **Bill Snyder** days is how Prince and his staff have recruited.

Prince put off filling out his staff until he had time to personally hit the recruiting trail during the open period in late November. He then hired more assistants, like **Pat Washington** of Tennessee and **Matt Wallerstedt** of Akron, known for their recruiting.

Snyder was known for taking a "prove it to me as a senior" recruiting approach that often left K-State with among the Big 12's fewest commitments through the summer. But under Prince, K-State was already approaching double figures in commitments before breaking spring camp.

• Prince said all quarterbacks should be measured by nothing more than getting the ball into the end zone and winning games. That's why he knew he would need fall two-a-days and maybe more to name a starter.

"It's one thing to do it in practice," he said, "but we think it's the most challenging of all the positions in all of sports. I don't think anyone other than maybe a pro golfer would really understand."

• Offensive coordinator **James Franklin** was the Green Bay Packers' wide receivers coach last season after five seasons at Maryland. He said he'll keep a free mind with his offensive philosophies.

"Until you really evaluate your personnel and see what they can do and what their strengths are, it's hard to say what we'll do," he said. "It is a fluid concept."

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Evridge	9	104.44	213	102	7	47.9	1365	6	80	151.7
Webb	8	145.81	105	62	5	59.0	850	9	73	106.2

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Clayton	9	137	680	43	637	4.6	4	80	70.8
Fisher	9	48	303	14	289	6.0	0	63	32.1
Evridge	9	102	414	211	203	2.0	4	32	22.6

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Nelson	11	45	669	14.9	8	80	60.8
Moreira	10	35	485	13.9	1	42	48.5
Dennis	11	20	281	14.1	2	47	25.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Archer 72, Watts 71, Mack 53
Interceptions: McKinney 3, five with 1
Sacks: George 4, Archer 3, Diles 2, Sims 2
Tackles for loss: Archer 9.5, Mack 7, George 6

(5-6, 2-6)

Results

W	Florida International	35-21
W	at Marshall	21-19
W	North Texas	54-7
L	at Oklahoma	21-43
W	Kansas	12-3
L	at Texas Tech	20-59
L	Texas A&M	28-30
L	Colorado	20-23
L	at Iowa State	17-45
L	at Nebraska	25-27
W	Missouri	36-28



ALLAN EVRIDGE

be moved to tackle — even at 245 pounds — out of sheer necessity. The unit's other stalwart, tackle Quintin Echols, was woefully out of shape in spring drills.

Tackle Alphonso Moran and end Ian Campbell were thrown into the fire last year, but they are not proven commodities.

So a line that produced just nine of the team's 21 sacks last season could actually take a step back. When asked if

newcomers — including junior college tackle Brandon Balkcom and junior college ends Moses Manu and Rob Jackson — need to contribute right away, Price answered simply, "That would be my hope."

There is more optimism in the back seven. Brandon Archer is not only a total package at outside linebacker, he should combine with free safety Marcus Watts to provide leadership. Archer was consistent in leading the team with 72 tackles last season.

Reserve linebacker Zach Diles had flashes of brilliance in putting up 50 tackles, and a good spring made him the front-runner in the middle. On the weak side, returning starter Maurice Mack is undersized but fast. He will be utilized even if sophomore Reggie Walker simply proves too good to keep off the field.

Watts is the only sure thing in the secondary, though the Cats should find solid corner play out of a group that includes experienced players in Bryan Baldwin, Justin McKinney, Byron Garvin and converted safety Kyle Williams.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Wildcats return experience across the board. Former walk-on Jeff Snodgrass was 10 of 16 on field goal attempts last season, including two 50-yarders. He will try to maintain his role as a senior, though former vaunted recruit Jared Parker, a sophomore, could come on.

Punter Tim Reyer will try to bounce back from an inconsistent season, falling

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

FS Marcus Watts

Junior named the team's Defensive Player of the Year and Special Teams Player of the Year last season, all after playing wide receiver in 2004. ... Second on the team last season with 71 tackles, 55 of them solo. ... In-state recruit considered transferring after failing to record an offensive stat as a redshirt freshman. He did have 11 tackles, nine of them solo, on special teams, though. ... In addition to being the top special teams tackler, he had three punt returns and was the holder.



EMERGING STAR

RB Parrish Fisher

In a win over North Texas, became the first true freshman to start at tailback in Bill Snyder's 17 seasons at Kansas State. He responded with a school freshman record of 169 yards on 21 carries. ... Had only 48 carries in nine games but averaged 6.0 yards. ... Also had 89 receiving yards. ... Was selected to *Texas Sports* magazine's 2003 High School All-Class Super Team. The other tailback on the team was Adrian Peterson. ... Did not have a carry in the team's final three games.



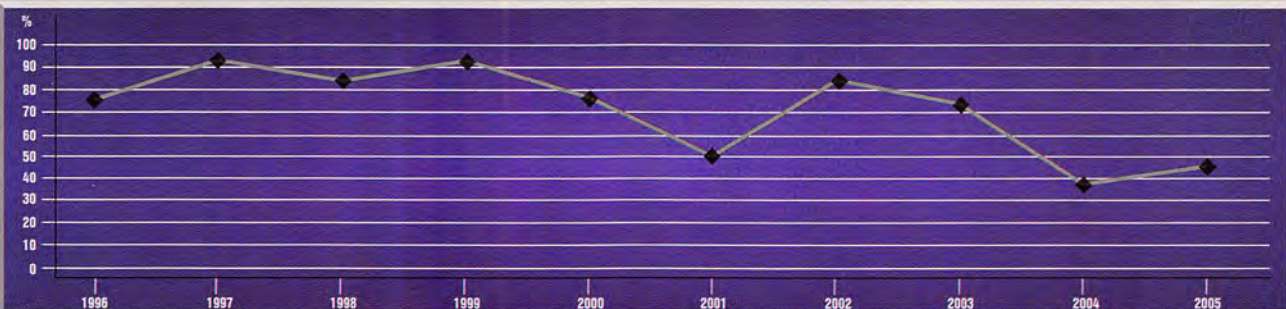
TOP NEWCOMER

DE Moses Manu

He addresses one of the biggest need areas on the team and participated in spring drills after signing out of El Camino (Calif.) Junior College, where he had 50 tackles last season, 19 for loss. ... At 6-3, 260 pounds, he's an all-around athlete. His best high school sport was volleyball. Before that, his main sport was rugby. Also played prep basketball. ... Played only one season of organized football before high school, catching 22 passes as a tight end.



Kansas State's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

JORDY NELSON



Photo by John Williamson

Walk-on Keeps Proving Himself

No one was more surprised than Jordy Nelson when his streak just kept going. Nelson last year became the first player in school history to catch a touchdown pass in the team's first seven games of the season.

"That was just getting lucky," Nelson during spring drills. "I was still just trying to be comfortable."

Nelson was a safety in 2004, a position that did not earn him a second of playing time as a redshirt freshman. That was disappointing

because Nelson seemed to be following the path Jon McGraw traveled.

Like McGraw, Nelson played at Riley County High School, just a few miles from Manhattan, but was not offered a scholarship to K-State.

McGraw ended up walking on as a wide receiver, switched to safety and went on to become an NFL second-round pick. With a similar physical makeup and surprising speed at 6-3, 210 pounds, Nelson was compared to McGraw from day one.

Instead, as a sophomore last season, Nelson started earning comparisons to Quincy Morgan.

Nelson has the size to beat smaller defenders, often getting jump-ball passes in the end zone, and the speed — perhaps only wide receiver Yamon Figurs is a faster teammate — to get past bigger defenders.

The result was 45 catches (including an 80-yarder at Texas Tech) for 669 yards (107 of them at Oklahoma). He had eight touchdown receptions. He even ran for another score.

"I think it was still about proving myself as a walk-on," Nelson said. "Everyone was given a fair shake. The walk-ons were treated like everyone else. But in your mind, you still think about not getting offered a scholarship."

Now the question becomes whether Nelson will be offered the chance to improve.

First, opposing defenses will be geared toward stopping him. More important, there is no bigger area of concern on the team than quarterback, and K-State is installing a new West Coast-style offense.

"There's a lot to learn, but it's not that much different," Nelson said.

"Mainly, I end up in a lot of the same spots, really. The difference is how I'm supposed to get there. I think I'll be better because I'm still learning so much about route discipline and the little adjustments you make on offense.

"Getting the experience under my belt of last year is really going to help."

to 40.3 yards per punt (and also making some costly miscues) after averaging 43 yards as a freshman. Senior long snapper Jeff Mortimer returns.

K-State has two dangerous return men in Yamon Figurs, who has run a sub 4.3-second 40-yard dash, and shifty Jermaine Moreira, who is a threat each time he manages to hang on to the ball.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

While six of the first seven games are at home, this is not the entire cream-puff schedule often associated with K-State.

The Wildcats do get the tune-ups they desperately need — Illinois State and Florida Atlantic — and then face a little bigger challenge from rebuilding Marshall.

If K-State can start 3-0, it will then get a big test by playing host to Louisville, a team with BCS aspirations.

The Big 12 schedule sets up well, starting with winnable games at Baylor and against visiting Oklahoma State. If the North is wide open, a Nebraska-Missouri-Iowa State stretch could determine if K-State can stay in the mix.

— Jeffrey Parson

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	ILLINOIS STATE
Sept. 9	FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Sept. 16	MARSHALL
Sept. 23	LOUISVILLE
Sept. 30	at Baylor
Oct. 7	OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 14	NEBRASKA
Oct. 21	at Missouri
Oct. 28	IOWA STATE
Nov. 4	at Colorado
Nov. 11	TEXAS
Nov. 18	at Kansas



NEW MEXICO ST.

AGGIES

NEW MEXICO ST. AGGIES NEW MEXICO ST. AGGIES NEW MEXICO ST. AGGIES

AT A GLANCE

2005

0-12, 0-8 WAC (9th)

COACH

Hal Mumme — At NMSU: 0-12, 1 year;
overall: 97-76-1, 15 years

RETURNING STARTERS

14; 8 offense, 6 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WR A.J. Harris, S Eric Carrie, QB Chase Holbrook, DB Courtney Bryan, RB Justine Buries, WR Aikeem Jolla, WT Tim Tolbert

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Starting quarterback Chase Holbrook played in Mumme's system at Southeastern Louisiana two years ago. Receiving unit boasts speed and depth. Courtney Bryan and Alex Bernard are talented cornerbacks.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Offensive line lacks depth. Aggies must replace starting punter and kicker. Defense that ranked near the bottom in most major statistical categories last season must find replacement for LB Jimmy Cottrell, the leading tackler in the nation.

KEY LOSSES

QB Royal Gill, P Brad Evans, OG Nick Cole, WR Paul Dombrowski, LB Jimmy Cottrell, DB Shukree Shabazz, S Matt Griebel

OVERVIEW

New Mexico State and Temple were the only I-A programs to go winless last season. The Aggies have the personnel to be better on both sides of the ball and the schedule is tolerable with a pair of I-AA's. Mumme should reach his 100th career win — he's currently at 97 — but the Aggies probably won't be a factor in the WAC.

Offense Ready to Soar in Year 2 under Mumme

OFFENSE

There shouldn't be a quarterback controversy this season. Chase Holbrook, who played in 10 games for Southeastern Louisiana two years ago when Hal Mumme was the coach, is the unquestioned starter.

Royal Gill, who has transferred to Southern Utah, and Joey Vincent split time a year ago. Holbrook passed for 343 yards and four touchdowns in the spring game to ensure no such repeat of a time-share.

Junior running back Justine Buries topped the 100-yard mark four times last season, finishing with 779 yards. Still, the Aggies must improve their rushing attack, which ranked 114th.

Mumme has assembled a deep group of receivers for his pass-happy attack, including Miami transfer Aikeem Jolla. He was considered something of an underachiever with the Hurricanes, but was being touted as the Aggies' No. 1 receiver, even before the start of spring drills.

Jolla received a waiver from the NCAA, allowing him to transfer without sitting out a season. His family was displaced by Hurricane Katrina and his ailing mother relocated to Las Cruces.

Jolla will be joined at wideout by, among others, A.J. Harris (39 catches, 448 yards, four touchdowns), Brandon Allen, Tim Tolbert, Derek Dubois, Chris Williams and Jahmeel Hobson.

Mike Martinez, the only lineman to start every game last season, is the cornerstone of a front that can't afford injuries. Martinez, who has started 23 consecutive games, will probably move from center to left tackle.

DEFENSE

The Aggies allowed 480.3 yards and 38.8 points per game last year ... and then lost two of their best players in linebacker Jimmy Cottrell and safety Matt Griebel. The pair combined for 328 stops — 30 percent of the team's tackles.

But there is optimism that the returning personnel and newcomers can begin to thrive in coordinator Woody Widenhofer's blitzing 3-4 scheme, particularly if cornerbacks Alex Bernard and Courtney Bryan hold up in one-on-one coverage.

Shauna Leaupepe, a redshirt in 2005, is penciled in to replace Cottrell. Tim McManigal is expected to start inside next to Leaupepe. La'Auli Fonoti, Jamar Cotton, Nathan Nuttall and Michael Brewer are options on the outside.

Defensive end Jared Naylor, who started 10 games last year, and nose guard Jeremy Weeks, who started the last half of the season, return up front.

Safety Eric Carrie is the top returning tackler from last season with 80.

SPECIAL TEAMS

This could be a troublesome area for the Aggies. Punter Brad Evans and kicker Connor Foley, who made just six of 12 field goal attempts, are gone.

Matt Pratt and Mike Hartnett are vying for kicking duties.

The Aggies have some experience at kick returning with Dubois (24.1 yards per return), Harris and Williams, who had a 94-yard TD return. Jolla is another possibility.

— Jim Meehan

**MISSOURI****TIGERS***For more coverage of the Tigers, visit www.missouri.rivals.com***MISSOURI TIGERS MISSOURI TIGERS MISSOURI TIGERS MISSOURI TIGERS**

AT A GLANCE

2005

7-5 overall, 4-4 Big 12 (T-2nd, North)

COACH

Gary Pinkel — At Missouri: 29-30, 5 years; overall: 102-67-3, 15 years

RETURNING STARTERS

17, 8 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Chase Daniel, RB Tony Temple, TE Chase Coffman, TE Martin Rucker, DE Brian Smith, FS David Overstreet

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Martin Rucker and Chase Coffman might be the best tandem of pass-catching tight ends in the country. The defensive line is loaded with proven veterans like Brian Smith and Lorenzo Williams, and potential stars in Stryker Sulak and Ziggy Hood.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The running game will sorely miss QB Brad Smith on designed runs and broken plays. Missouri needs a few running backs to stay healthy and produce consistently. Three defensive backs have little or no starting experience. Missouri is razor-thin at linebacker.

KEY LOSSES

QB Brad Smith, WR Sean Coffey, OG Tony Palmer, OLB Derrick Ming, FS Jason Simpson, CB Marcus King

OVERVIEW

A recruiting class that included only four in-state high school players reinforced some of the growing impatience among the fan base. A division championship would surely soften those concerns. Possible? If Missouri can make the spread offense work despite losing the most prolific offensive player in team history, the Tigers could compete in the Big 12 North.

Tigers Try to Build on Momentum Without Smith

For a few moments, the blast of cool water down Gary Pinkel's back seemed to wash away all the painful memories of 2005.

Soaked from the traditional postgame ice bath at last year's Independence Bowl, Pinkel shivered while he celebrated an unthinkable comeback against South Carolina on Dec. 30.

Consider it baptism by ice, not fire.

The Tigers trailed Steve Spurrier's Gamecocks 21-0 and 28-7 in the first half, but with resilient defense and the grandest of grand finales by quarterback Brad Smith, Missouri pulled off the biggest come-from-behind victory in team history, winning 38-31.

As they did after each of their six regular-season victories, Missouri players celebrated on the 25-yard line, honoring the jersey number of late teammate Aaron O'Neal, a redshirt freshman linebacker who died in July after he collapsed during an offseason voluntary workout.

Though a lawsuit against Pinkel, school administrators and trainers still lingered this spring — an autopsy revealed O'Neal died from meningitis — a heartbroken team rallied around the memory of their popular teammate.

A season that began with personal anguish — Pinkel also lost his younger brother, Greg, in January — ended happily with hope for the future.

"I think the pride of the Missouri fans, they really grabbed hold of that," Pinkel said of Missouri's second bowl victory in 24 years.

"When I go through the airport, I might get 20 people by the time I can

get on the airplane congratulating our team. I just want to make a habit of that. Our fans deserve that."

Missouri returns 17 starters, but carrying momentum into 2006 won't be easy. At the forefront of challenges lies the quarterback job — a spot Smith held since 2002 while setting 69 team, conference and NCAA records. Sophomore Chase Daniel is the likely successor after appearing in 10 games last year as prep work for this season and beyond.

Despite the renewed hope the bowl win produced, Missouri fans haven't forgotten the team's disastrous 2004 season or last year's failure to win a weak Big 12 North Division. With a dynamic tight end tandem, a new quarterback and perhaps the Big 12's most underrated defensive line, a division championship would surely soften those concerns.

OFFENSE

After Missouri stumbled to 5-6 in 2004, Pinkel adopted the spread-option scheme made popular by Urban Meyer and others recently.

The changes led to more plays, more yards and more scores. In fact, no Division I-A team averaged more plays per game than Missouri (81.8).

Though they didn't always make use of those added opportunities — poor passing efficiency bogged down too many drives — the Tigers ranked in the top four of the Big 12 in rushing, passing and scoring.

But when you lose college football's most electric running quarterback outside of Austin, does the offense leave with



Brian Smith Photo by Steve Beyer



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 205.3 ypg rushing (3rd Big 12/17th NCAA), 224.5 ypg passing (4th/53rd), 429.8 ypg total offense (4th/24th), 30.8 ppg (4th/34th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Chase Daniel	So.	Played in 10 games in '05 as Brad Smith's backup.	Brandon Coleman, Sr.
RB	Marcus Woods*	Jr.	Started 10 games, but injuries were a nuisance.	Tony Temple, Jr.
WR	Brad Ekwerekwu*	Sr.	Catches increase annually, but yards per catch have fallen.	Jason Ray, Jr.
WR	Will Franklin*	Jr.	Has potential to be team's most explosive wideout.	Greg Bracey, Jr.
WR	Tommy Saunders	So.	Former walk-on caught 12 passes in '05.	Andrew Hoskins, Sr.
TE	Martin Rucker*	Jr.	Forms one half of nation's most prolific TE combo.	Chase Coffman, So.
LT	Tyler Luellen*	Jr.	Suffered torn ACL in March; could be OK for season.	Louis Pintola, Sr.
LG	Monte Wyrick	Jr.	Line's only new starter, replaces Tony Palmer.	Ryan Madison, So.
C	Adam Spieker*	Jr.	Quiet and consistent. Started every game past two seasons.	James Stigall, Fr.
RG	Mike Cook*	Sr.	Team's most experienced guard with 11 career starts.	Dain Wise, Fr.
RT	Joel Clinger*	Sr.	Heavy metal fan has team's best tattoo collection.	Colin Brown, So.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 151.3 ypg rushing (9th Big 12/63rd NCAA), 217.0 ypg passing (7th/58th), 368.3 total defense (9th/50th), 29.2 ppg (10th/81st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Xzavie Jackson*	Sr.	Versatile senior also plays standup LB in 3-4 sets.	Stryker Sulak, So.
DT	Lorenzo Williams*	Jr.	Had 5.5 sacks in 12 starts last year.	Ziggy Hood, So.
DT	Jamar Smith*	Sr.	Junior college transfer had 12 tackles for loss in '05.	DeMarcus Scott, Sr.
DE	Brian Smith*	Sr.	MU's all-time sacks leader should add to record.	Josh Barbo, Jr.
LB	Marcus Bacon*	Sr.	Quietly put together steady season as first-time starter.	Steve Redmond, So.
LB	Dedrick Harrington	Sr.	Tiger fans waiting for breakthrough season.	Brock Christopher, So.
LB	Van Alexander	So.	Hometown product eager to contribute as a starter.	Chad Washington, Fr.
CB	Darnell Terrell	Jr.	Late interception sealed Independence Bowl victory.	Trenile Washington, So.
CB	Domonique Johnson*	So.	Team's most experienced CB made two starts last year.	Hardy Ricks, Fr.
SS	Brandon Massey	Sr.	Michigan State transfer should battle Moore for time.	William Moore, So.
FS	David Overstreet*	Sr.	Senior leader should earn some All-Big 12 honors.	Mack Breed, So.

*Returning starter

him? Pinkel insists it won't.

"This wasn't a change for Brad Smith," Pinkel said. "What we'll do with this quarterback is ... he'll be more of a distributor of the football."

With Chase Daniel at quarterback, Missouri will cut down on the designed runs that Smith ran so brilliantly the past four years. Daniel's no stiff in the pocket. He rushed for nearly 3,000 yards in two high school seasons in Southlake, Texas. But his job is to share the ball, not hoard. More Steve Nash, less Kobe Bryant.

Without Smith's dazzling running skills, Missouri needs a consistent threat from its tailbacks.

Tony Temple led MU's tailbacks in yards (437) and carries (81) last year, but fumbles and ankle injuries were a prob-

lem. He missed all of spring camp while recovering from shoulder surgery.

Marcus Woods started 10 of the first 11 games last year, but his body broke down in the last few weeks. A groin injury left him a spectator at the Independence Bowl. Perhaps Missouri's most intriguing offensive player is redshirt freshman tailback Connell Davis. At 6-3, he's six inches taller than the next tallest tailback.

"He's going to be a prime-time back," defensive end Xzavie Jackson said of Davis. "Teams are going to have to keep an eye on him because he runs like Adrian Peterson."

The passing game will rely on the nation's most prolific tight end combination. Junior Martin Rucker led MU with 47 catches for 567 yards last year, followed closely by sophomore Chase Coffman,

who had 47 catches for 503 yards.

The Tigers need more production from junior receiver Will Franklin, the team's best big-play threat who had 40 catches last year but just two touchdowns. Senior Brad Ekwerekwu, junior Greg Bracey, sophomore Tommy Saunders and perhaps true freshman Jeremy Maclin will round out the receiving corps.

The offensive line returns four starters, but loses its best blocker in guard Tony Palmer.

DEFENSE

Decimated by several injuries and a suspension, Missouri held South Carolina to just a field goal in the second half of its bowl game. That sort of resiliency had been missing for a team that



Jeremy Maclin, WR

Maclin was a huge signee for the Tigers. Not only was he the No. 3 player in Missouri, he was the top offensive player in the St. Louis area. Maclin, who should great in the slot and on special teams for the Tigers, was originally committed to Oklahoma, but backed away from the Sooners and decided that Columbia was the right place for him.



Tim Barnes, OL

Barnes played eight-man football in high school, so the transition to Division I football on the Big 12 level might be a little tough. But there is no doubt that the 6-3, 308-pounder is more than talented enough to make the jump. He was Missouri's first commitment for the class of 2006, when he committed in June of 2004. Barnes would have been heavily recruited if it was not for his early pledge.



Del Howard, DB

Howard is a big-time cover corner from one of the top programs in the Dallas Ft. Worth Metroplex. He might not be the tallest guy around at 5-10 and 175 pounds, but he does have a nasty streak, great coverage skills and the ability to stick with receivers like glue. He could help the Missouri defense quickly in 2006.



J.P. Tillman, QB

The last thing that Missouri needed was another quarterback, but when Tillman showed interest in the Tigers it was too good to pass up. The 6-2, 223-pounder might look more like a full-back, but he is a pure quarterback and a good one at that. Tillman moved up to Cy Falls as a senior from a private school in Houston and made the transition with great success. With the Tigers loaded with other quarterbacks, Tillman could sneak up and surprise a lot of people down the road.

Commitments	21
Average Stars	2.67
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	1
★★★☆☆	12
★★★☆☆	8
Total Stars	56
National Rank: 38	Big 12: 9

2007 NEEDS

The Tigers will need help along the offensive line after taking only three players at the position in 2006. Defensive tackle and defensive end will also be something the Tigers would like to target, too. Don't be surprised if Mizzou also goes out and recruits another kicker for their special teams.

NAME	POS.	HT., WT.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ALEXANDER, Danario	WR	6-3, 185	★★	Marlin, TX	Marlin
All-State honorable mention. ... Caught 49 passes for 850 yards and nine touchdowns as a senior. ... District champion in long jump and triple jump.					
BARNES, Tim	OL	6-3, 308	★★★★	Hughesville, MO	Pettis County N.W.
Rivals.com's No. 23 offensive guard. ... No. 4 recruit in Missouri. ... All-State. ... Also played basketball and baseball. ... Committed to the Tigers the summer before his junior season.					
BOOKER, Marquis	LB	6-0, 235	★★	Ardmore, OK	Ardmore
As a senior, had 156 tackles, six sacks and four interceptions. ... District Linebacker of the Year as a senior. ... Moved from running back as a sophomore.					
BRIDGES, Castine	DB	6-2, 195	★★★	Pleasant Hill, CA	Diablo Valley
Rivals.com's No. 89 overall junior college recruit. ... Intercepted eight passes in back to back seasons. ... Conference defensive MVP last year. ... Had five career interceptions at Richmond Valley (Calif.) Pinole Valley.					
BROWN, Cornelius	DB	6-0, 195	★★★	Reedley, CA	Reedley CC
Rivals.com's No. 92 overall junior college recruit. ... All-State and All-Conference last year. ... All-State as a senior at Adel (Ga.) Cook. ... Played three years of basketball in high school.					
BROWN, Justin	DB	6-2, 195	★★★	Wahpeton, ND	N.D. State C.O.S.
Intercepted four passes and broke up 13 passes last season. ... Led conference with average kickoff return of 28.4 yards. ... First-team All-State as a senior at Blue Springs (Mo.)					
COSLET, Bart	DE	6-6, 225	★★★	St. Charles, MO	Howell Central
Rivals.com's No. 26 weakside defensive end. ... No. 12 recruit in Missouri. ... Also recruited to play Division I basketball. ... Missed senior season due to knee injury. ... Had three sacks as a junior.					
GROOMS, Dominic	QB	6-1, 172	★★★	Tampa, FL	Middleton
Rivals.com's No. 24 dual-threat quarterback. ... Four-year starter at quarterback. ... As a senior, threw for 1,600 yards and 16 touchdowns and rushed for 512 yards and eight touchdowns.					
HERNANDEZ, Jesse	OL	6-3, 293	★★	Ardmore, OK	Ardmore
Rivals.com's No. 26 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Also played defensive line and had two sacks. ... Also played tight end. ... Had 11 sacks as a junior and 14 sacks as a sophomore.					
HOWARD, Del	DB	5-10, 175	★★★	Garland, TX	South Garland
Had 143 tackles as a senior. ... Second-team All-State. ... Added seven sacks and three interceptions. ... District defensive MVP.					

NAME	POS.	HT., WT.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
MACLIN, Jeremy	WR	6-0, 187	★★★★	St. Louis	Kirkwood
Rivals.com's No. 24 wide receiver. ... No. 3 recruit in Missouri. ... Caught 41 passes for 1,042 yards and 11 touchdowns. ... Averaged 25.4 yards per catch. ... Also ran for 293 yards and four touchdowns. ... Averaged 24.6 yards per punt return.					
PERRY, Jared	WR	6-0, 155	★★★	La Marque, TX	La Marque
Caught 51 passes for 1,000 yards and eight touchdowns as a junior. ... Caught 32 passes for 540 yards and 13 touchdowns as a senior. ... Also runs track.					
PRINCE, Mike	OL	6-4, 278	★★	Southlake, TX	Carroll
Started on two 16-0 teams at Carroll. ... First-team All-State. ... Also competed in track and wrestling. ... Former teammate of Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel.					
RUTLAND, Kevin	DB	6-1, 185	★★★	Houston, TX	North Shore
Rivals.com's No. 51 cornerback. ... Also played wide receiver and quarterback at Galena Park. ... Second-team All-District.					
SCOTT, Brian	DT	6-2, 256	★★	College Station, TX	Consolidated
Had 85 tackles and four sacks as a senior. ... Recovered five fumbles. ... Second-team All-District.					
SIMPSON, Paul	WR	6-2, 185	★★	Hayward, CA	Chabott CC
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Caught one touchdown pass last year. ... All-Conference DB with one interception. ... Graduated from Oakland San Leandro.					
STULL, John	DE	6-4, 250	★★★	Columbia, MO	Rock Bridge
Rivals.com's No. 61 strongside defensive end. ... No. 16 recruit in Missouri. ... First-team All-State. ... Had 9.5 sacks and 64 tackles as a senior. ... Also played basketball.					
THOMAS, La'Roderick	ATH	6-2, 190	★★	Dallas	South Oak Cliff
Two-year starter at quarterback. ... Threw for 1,000 yards and threw for 300 as a senior. ... Accounted for 13 touchdowns in 2005. ... Helped basketball team to state title as a junior.					
TILLMAN, J.P.	QB	6-2, 223	★★★	Cypress, TX	Cy Falls
Rivals.com's No. 22 dual-threat quarterback. ... Completed 94 of 168 passes as a senior. ... Threw for 1,406 yards and 10 touchdowns as a senior. ... Completed 51 percent of his passes as a junior. ... Rushed for more than 200 yards each season.					
VAUGHNS, Tremane	DB	5-0, 180	★★★	Pasadena, CA	Pasadena CC
Rivals.com's No. 94 overall junior college recruit. ... Played wide receiver, quarterback, running back and defensive backs while returning kicks and punts at Pasadena CC.					
WEATHERSPOON, Sean	LB	6-1, 195	★★	Jasper, TX	Jasper
District Player of the Year. ... Had 98 tackles as a senior. ... Added four sacks and two interceptions. ... All-District guard in basketball.					

TIGERS SPRING ROSTER

NOTEBOOK

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
5	VAN ALEXANDER	LB	6-0	230	So	Columbia	31	DARREN MEADE	WR	5-11	180	Sr	Champaign, IL
15	MARCUS BACON	LB	6-2	225	Sr	Houston, TX	65	ZACH MILLIGAN	DL	6-1	215	Fr	Hardin
47	JOSH BARBO	DL	6-5	280	Jr	Conway Springs, KS	21	WILLIAM MOORE	FS	6-2	215	So	Hayti
29	DAN BARNES	QB	6-3	225	Fr	Marshall	13	CURTIS NELSON	S	5-9	180	Sr	Waynesville
96	JARON BASTON	DL	6-1	290	Fr	Blue Springs	29	SHERMAN NEWSOME	DB	5-10	170	Fr	New Madrid
95	STEVEN BLAIR	DL	6-3	230	Jr	Godfrey, IL	87	LUCAS NULL	WR	6-0	185	So	Crystal City
60	GORDON BOWEN	OL	6-2	290	Fr	Memphis, TN	25	AARON ONEAL	LB	6-3	220	So	Creve Coeur
85	GREG BRACEY	WR	6-2	240	Jr	Milwaukee, WI	8	DAVID OVERSTREET	FS	6-0	210	Sr	Dallas, TX
24	MACK BREED	FS	6-1	205	So	San Antonio, TX	14	CHASE PATTON	QB	6-5	220	So	Columbia
61	COLIN BROWN	OL	6-7	310	So	Braymer	56	NICK PATTON	LB	6-1	225	Fr	Effingham, IL
4	TRAVIS CARDOZA	SS	5-11	200	Jr	Springfield	59	JOHN PEARSON	OL	6-1	245	So	Maplewood
14	MATT CASADAY	K/P	5-11	190	Fr	Plano, TX	67	LOUIS PINTOLA	OL	6-4	305	Sr	Los Angeles, CA
28	ADAM CASEY	WR	6-1	195	So	Chesterfield	4	JASON RAY	WR	6-1	210	Jr	Porter, OK
35	BROCK CHRISTOPHER	LB	6-2	240	So	Kearney	18	STEVE REDMOND	LB	6-1	235	So	Kansas City
74	JOEL CLINGER	OL	6-6	315	Sr	Warrenton	46	DANNY RELLEGERT	P	6-1	200	Fr	Farmington
45	CHASE COFFMAN	TE	6-6	230	So	Peculiar	28	HARDY RICKS	DB	5-11	190	Fr	St. Louis
11	BRANDON COLEMAN	QB	6-4	215	Sr	Miami, FL	75	KYLE RIGGS	OL	6-6	300	So	Festus
55	MIKE COOK	OL	6-2	315	Sr	Friendswood, TX	48	BRANDON ROOKS	WR	5-11	195	Fr	St. Louis
97	TARELL CORBY	DL	6-3	230	Fr	Kansas City	82	MARTIN RUCKER	TE	6-5	245	Jr	St. Joseph
90	ADAM CROSSETT	PK/P	6-3	225	Jr	Liberty	26	ERIK RUDIN	DB	5-8	170	Fr	St. Louis
20	BRANDON CROUCH	S	5-9	280	Fr	Springfield, IL	41	JOHN RUTH	LB	5-10	220	So	Jefferson City
10	CHASE DANIEL	QB	6-1	220	So	Southlake, TX	84	TOMMY SAUNDERS	WR	5-11	210	So	Kearney
2	CONNELL DAVIS	TB	6-3	205	Fr	Portland, TX	64	JOE SCHUMACHER	LB	5-11	235	Fr	Columbia
15	KEVIN DUNCAN	SS	5-10	200	So	O'Fallon	58	DEMARCUS SCOTT	DL	6-0	285	Sr	Greenville, MS
86	BRAD EKWEREKWU	WR	6-4	215	Sr	Arlington, TX	14	DAVID SHANKS	DB	5-9	170	So	St. Louis
41	SPENCER EVANS	DB	5-11	185	Fr	Bel-Air, TX	45	AUSTIN SHELLNUT	LB	5-11	205	So	Eureka
3	WILLIAM FRANKLIN	WR	6-2	205	Jr	St. Louis	6	PAUL SIMPSON	DB	6-2	185	Jr	Oakland, CA
40	CHRIS GARES	WR	5-9	195	Fr	Hartsburg	39	BRIAN SMITH	DE	6-4	230	Sr	Denton, TX
43	JON GISSINGER	TE	6-2	230	Fr	San Diego, CA	92	JAMAR SMITH	DL	6-1	280	Sr	Miami, FL
7	EARL GOLDSMITH	TB	5-8	200	So	Denton, TX	81	CHRISTOPHER SOBOTA	DL	6-2	245	So	St. Louis
78	KURTIS GREGORY	OL	6-5	305	Fr	Blackburn	77	ADAM SPIEKER	OL	6-2	310	Jr	Webb City
33	DEDRICK HARRINGTON	LB	6-4	240	Jr	Mexico	51	JAMES STIGALL	OL	6-2	305	Fr	Blue Springs
10	MATT HOENES	P	6-1	195	Sr	Branson	38	STRYKER SULAK	DL	6-4	245	So	Rockdale, TX
94	EVANDER HOOD	DL	6-3	280	So	Amarillo, TX	95	TRACE TEAS	PK	6-1	205	Jr	Springfield
35	ANDREW HOSKINS	WR	6-3	210	Sr	Plattsburg	22	TONY TEMPLE	TB	5-9	190	Jr	Kansas City
89	DEQUINCY HOWARD	TE	6-4	250	Sr	Tyler, TX	3	DARNELL TERRELL	DB	6-2	195	Jr	St. Louis
32	AUSTIN HUFF	TB	5-7	185	Fr	Brentwood, TN	54	CHRIS TIPTON	OL	6-4	300	Jr	Bowling Green
21	JERRILL HUMPHREY	WR	6-4	215	So	LaGrange	72	PHIDNEY TROY	OL	6-5	290	So	St. Louis
1	JIMMY JACKSON	TB	5-8	200	So	Caruthersville	24	JEFFREY WALDMAN	TB	5-10	205	Fr	St. Louis
48	XZAVIE JACKSON	DE	6-4	275	Sr	Vacaville, CA	17	CHAD WASHINGTON	LB	5-11	210	Fr	Lancaster, TX
22	ALEX JOANNES	S	6-3	200	Fr	Blair Oaks	9	TRENLE WASHINGTON	DB	5-10	185	So	Marietta, OK
2	DOMONIQUE JOHNSON	DB	6-2	190	So	Texas City, TX	99	LORENZO WILLIAMS	DL	6-2	285	Jr	Midwest City, OK
73	DAVID LAZAROFF	OL	5-11	280	Jr	Chesterfield	68	DAIN WISE	OL	6-5	290	Fr	Midwest City, OK
79	TYLER LUELLEN	OL	6-6	300	Jr	Bethany	99	JEFF WOLFERT	PK	6-1	180	Fr	Overland Park, KS
76	RYAN MADISON	OL	6-5	300	So	Bethany	32	ALEX WOODLEY	DB	5-11	180	Jr	Mesquite, TX
19	BRANDON MASSEY	SS	6-1	200	Sr	St. Louis	20	MARCUS WOODS	TB	5-8	195	Jr	Farmington Hills, MI
26	BLAKE MAY	WR	6-0	180	Fr	Kansas City	71	MONTE WYRICK	OL	6-5	320	Jr	Texarkana, AR
66	CHRIS MCCARTHY	OL	6-4	305	Fr	Camdenton	57	ZACH ZELLMER	OL	6-3	275	Fr	Belleville, IL
90	BRENT MCCAULEY	LB	5-9	230	Fr	Savannah							

Three practices into Missouri's spring session, left tackle **Tyler Luellen** tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during a pass-rush drill. Luellen, a junior, started all 12 games in 2005.

Missouri coaches expected Luellen to be ready in time for the start of the season. Four years ago, Luellen tore multiple ligaments in his right knee playing high school basketball but recovered in time to win the state discus title four months later.

Senior **Louis Pintola**, a junior college transfer, took over the starting duties in Luellen's absence.

When a string of tornadoes demolished parts of central Missouri in early March, the Missouri coaching staff pooled together a donation to the family of redshirt freshman offensive tackle **Kurtis Gregory**, whose older sister lost her house in the storm.

Once the donation was cleared by the school's NCAA compliance office, the staff gave Gregory's family a \$1,000 line of credit at a local department store.

"It blew me away at first," Gregory said. "I didn't even know they could do something like that. I called Dad and told him, and he started to cry."

Tailback **Tony Temple** watched spring practice from the sidelines while recovering from offseason shoulder surgery that cleaned up a lingering injury from his high school career. Temple is expected to be ready for preseason camp.

Cornerback/kick returner **Alex Woodley** returned as a walk-on after he was dismissed from the team last summer for disciplinary reasons. Woodley can earn his scholarship back after meeting certain criteria.

Missouri signed a pair of defensive players from the junior college ranks in March: **Quran Barge**, an outside linebacker from College of the Sequoias in Visalia, Calif., and **Tommy Chavis**, a defensive tackle from Kilgore (Texas) College.

Barge, originally from Camden, N.J., was a highly touted safety coming out of high school but failed to qualify academically at the Division I-A level. Chavis was fully qualified coming out of high school in Orange, Texas, but was considered too small by most recruiters. He has three years of eligibility left.

(7-5, 4-4)

Results

W	Arkansas State	44-17
L	New Mexico	35-45
W	Troy	52-21
L	Texas	20-51
W	at Oklahoma State	38-31
W	Iowa State	OT 27-24
W	Nebraska	41-24
L	at Kansas	3-13
L	at Colorado	12-41
W	Baylor	31-16
L	at Kansas State	28-36
	Independence Bowl	
W	vs. South Carolina	38-31

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Smith	12	114.14	399	237	9	59.4	2304	13	50	192.0
Daniel	10	100.68	86	38	2	57.6	347	1	25	34.7

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Smith	12	229	1457	156	1301	5.7	16	79	108.4
Temple	10	81	462	25	437	5.4	3	59	43.7
Woods	10	93	450	15	435	4.7	3	32	43.5

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Rucker	12	47	567	12.1	1	46	47.2
Coffman	12	47	503	10.7	4	33	41.9
Coffey	8	40	448	11.2	2	37	56.0

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Ryans 76, Harper 69, Roach 66
Interceptions: King 3, Overstreet 2, Terrell 2
Sacks: Brian Smith 9, Jackson 6, Williams 5.5
Tackles for loss: Brian Smith 17, J. Smith 12, Jackson 11



TONY TEMPLE

ranked ninth in the Big 12 in total defense.

When backed up in the red zone, MU gave up a league-high 32 touchdowns last year, including 21 through the air — also the most in the Big 12. The Tigers ranked ninth in the league in rush defense, and only Oklahoma State allowed more rushing touchdowns than Missouri's 23.

That's the bad news. The good news is Missouri replaces only a few key contributors from its defense. Thirteen of Missouri's top 17 tacklers are back,

including all seven defensive linemen.

Perceived to be the team's weakness in 2005, Missouri's line is its obvious strength.

The Tigers are two-deep at every position along the front four, loaded with proven veterans like defensive ends Jackson and Brian Smith, the school's all-time sacks leader, and defensive tackle Lorenzo Williams. Behind them, there's potential sophomore stars in end Stryker Sulak and tackle Ziggy Hood.

Missouri is set at linebacker with returning seniors Dedrick Harrington (middle) and Marcus Bacon (strong side) plus promising sophomore Van Alexander (weak side). But there's little experienced depth.

Fiery leader David Overstreet patrols the secondary, moving from strong safety to free, while Brandon Massey and William Moore will battle for the strong spot. At cornerback, Darnell Terrell inherits one spot after making the game-clinching interception in the bowl game. Domonique Johnson, after starting twice last year including the bowl game, should man the other spot.

"That's probably as athletic (a secondary) as we've ever had here," Pinkel said. "Not probably. It is. Now we need good football players."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Junior Adam Crossett handled the place-kicking, kickoff and punting duties last season. The former walk-on figures to hold down all three spots this fall.

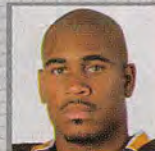
Crossett's punting average (42.7 yards) ranked 21st nationally. He kicked a game-winning field goal in overtime to

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

TEs Martin Rucker & Chase Coffman

It's impossible to separate Missouri's two NFL-caliber tight ends. Last year, they shared the team lead in receptions with 47 and combined for 1,070 receiving yards and five touchdowns. ... The 6-5, 245-pound Rucker and the 6-6, 230-pound Coffman present matchup nightmares for opposing defenses, especially when they line up together on the field. ... In Missouri's spread offense, Rucker and Coffman rarely get down in a three-point stance, but they're both effective blockers at the point of attack. ... They're most dangerous catching passes in traffic and making big plays downfield.



RUCKER

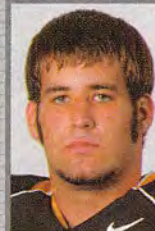


COFFMAN

EMERGING STAR

QB Chase Daniel

The Missouri coaches love the sophomore's swagger. ... Nicknamed "Chubbs" by his teammates and coaches, Daniel is not a statuesque quarterback. Generously listed at 6-1, Daniel checked in at a healthy 225 pounds this spring. ... The EA Sports National High School Player of the Year in 2004 showed glimpses of his passing skills and leadership in 10 appearances last season, but this spring he solidified his role as the offense's leader.



TOP NEWCOMER

TB Connell Davis

On a team that returns 17 starters, few newcomers are expected to contribute immediately. But keep an eye out for Davis, a 6-3 red-shirt freshman who displayed flashes of explosiveness this spring but was prone to fumbles because of his upright running style. ... If he adds bulk to his lanky frame, Davis could be an intriguing counterpart to Missouri's smaller tailbacks. ... Ran for more than 4,000 yards in his high school career in Portland, Texas.



Missouri's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

MARTIN RUCKER



Photo by Graythen/Getty Images

Speed, Grace and an Eye on NFL

The son of a state congressman, Martin Rucker delivered a stump speech as the Tigers fell behind 21-0 early in the Independence Bowl last Dec. 30.

"Everyone had their head down, but it was really early," the junior tight end recalled.

"I told everybody that I wasn't quitting. ... I just said, 'Come with me. If you want to go play, come with me. If you're going to sit there and hold your heads down, that's not

what I'm going to do. We're better than this, so let's go.'"

Missouri responded with the biggest come-from-behind victory in team history, with Rucker catching five passes for 83 yards to help revive an offense that outscored South Carolina 24-3 in the second half.

That capped a brilliant season for the 6-5, 245-pound tight end who is catching the eye of NFL scouts.

With another productive season this fall, Rucker will stake his place among Missouri's impressive collection of tight ends, a group that includes NFL Hall of Famer Kellen Winslow, former NFL journeyman A.J. Ofole and current Atlanta Falcon Dwayne Blakley.

Rucker ranks sixth all-time among Missouri tight ends with 66 receptions for 830 yards.

Perhaps the only thing that keeps Rucker from threatening Missouri's single-season receptions record is 6-6 sophomore Chase Coffman, the Tigers' other NFL-caliber tight end. Last season, Coffman matched Rucker with 47 receptions, catching four touchdowns to Rucker's one.

"It's definitely the best duo or tandem in the country, without a doubt," quarterback Chase Daniel said.

Rucker's game is more than speed and grace. Rarely down in a three-point stance, he's a credible blocker at the point of attack. His only touchdown last season — after he caught four in 2004 — came in the first quarter against Kansas State when he ripped the ball loose from a defender's hands in the end zone.

"There was certainly a couple times last year where (Rucker and Coffman) just went up and made plays," coach Gary Pinkel said. "We're fortunate to have those guys."

But for how long? Rucker dreams of lining up against his older brother, Carolina Panthers defensive end Mike Rucker.

"I can't think about it too much because you'll lose sight," he said. "We're out here to make this team win, but yeah, it's my goal."

beat Iowa State and gave the Tigers their first lead of the Independence Bowl with a 50-yarder in the fourth quarter.

Marcus Woods, Tommy Saunders, tailback Earl Goldsmith and cornerback Alex Woodley should figure into the return game.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Missouri failed to win a watered-down Big 12 North Division the past two seasons despite playing Baylor and Oklahoma State from the South. Both are gone from the schedule this fall — as is Texas — replaced by Texas Tech, Texas A&M and Oklahoma.

That's a more challenging rotation of South Division opponents, especially considering Missouri faces Texas Tech (Oct. 7) and Texas A&M (Oct. 14) in back-to-back road games. For the first time since 1996, Missouri wraps up the regular season against long-time rival Kansas (Nov. 25).

The non-conference slate includes two potential pitfalls: a home game against Mississippi (Sept. 9), followed by a trip to New Mexico (Sept. 16).

— Dave Matter

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	MURRAY STATE
Sept. 9	OLE MISS
Sept. 16	at New Mexico
Sept. 23	OHIO
Sept. 30	COLORADO
Oct. 7	at Texas Tech
Oct. 14	at Texas A&M
Oct. 21	KANSAS STATE
Oct. 28	OKLAHOMA
Nov. 4	at Nebraska
Nov. 18	at Iowa State
Nov. 25	KANSAS



IN 1877, OUR STAINS were BEING
USED to PROTECT WHALING SHIPS
from SEA SQUALLS and HURRICANES.

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AT A GLANCE

2005

8-4 overall, 4-4 Big 12 (T-2nd, North)

COACH

Bill Callahan — At Nebraska and overall: 13-10, 2 years

RETURNING STARTERS

15; 7 offense, 7 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Zac Taylor, RB Marlon Lucky, RB Cody Glenn, C Kurt Mann, DE Adam Carriker, LB Corey McKeon, LB Steve Octavien

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Front seven on defense has the potential to be dominating. QB Zac Taylor finished strong and should improve effectiveness with a year of experience. Young I-backs have potential to put punch back into running game.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Last season's rushing game was one of the worst in the country, partly because of inconsistency up front. Defense begins with new starters at both tackle spots and both safety positions. Three of top six linebackers are coming back from major injuries.

KEY LOSSES

IB Cory Ross, OL Brandon Koch, DT Titus Adams, DT Le Kevin Smith, FS Daniel Bullocks

OVERVIEW

The Huskers appear to have what it takes to win the soft Big 12 North and get into the Top 25, but they are still a notch or two below the conference's elite teams. The schedule is demanding as Nebraska faces the two teams that played for the national championship in 2005.

Winning the North ... That Would Restore the Order

Hot sellers around the Cornhusker state these days are T-shirts bearing the slogan, "Restore the Order."

The Huskers broke them out before last November's game against Colorado, then went out and pounded the Buffaloes, 30-3. They followed with the most impressive victory in Bill Callahan's two seasons as coach — an Alamo Bowl victory over Michigan.

Finishing 2005 with a feel-good three-game winning streak and bringing back 15 starters sure seems to indicate Nebraska is on the brink of a return to the glory days.

"We can be very good," defensive end Adam Carriker said. "We have a lot of returning people; we're familiar with the system. There is no excuse, no reason why we shouldn't be playing in the Big 12 title game."

Nebraska hasn't played for a conference championship since 1999. Callahan's first two seasons produced 13 wins, 10 losses and as many low points as highlights.

Still, there's reason for optimism. The offense appears improved. The defense, with an All-American candidate in Carriker and six other returning starters, has coordinator Kevin Cosgrove raving about its potential.

"We want to be the scariest defense in the country," linebacker Steve Octavien said.

"We already know what type of unit we have. We want everybody to know when we get on the field: 'The Blackshirts are on the field, you better watch out.'"

OFFENSE

For the first time, Callahan begins the season with an experienced quarterback (senior Zac Taylor) and the running backs and line to grind out yardage when necessary.

"We're at the point where we have a young line that's developing," Callahan said after the spring game. "They are getting the offense down now, the fundamentals of the running game. And we have good young running backs. We need to balance our attack."

Nebraska's once-proud running game slowed to a walk in Callahan's first two seasons. The Huskers produced just 96 rushing yards per game and 2.7 yards per carry last season, some of the school's worst numbers in the post-World War II era.

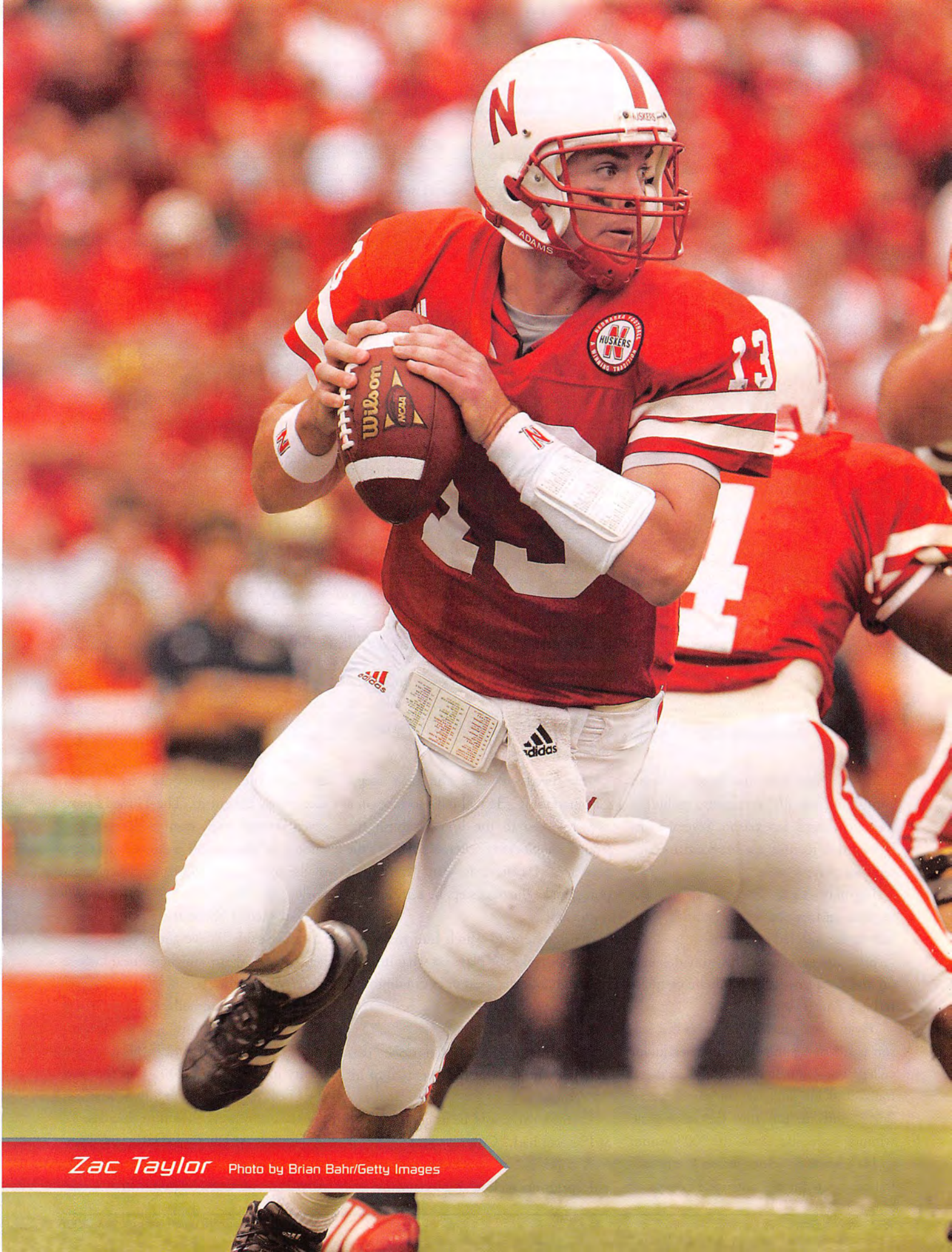
That led to an emphasis in the spring on putting some punch back in the ground attack.

"We've gotten a little better with it," sophomore I-back Cody Glenn said, "but we've still got a long way to go."

Glenn, Marlon Lucky and an improved line are reasons why the Huskers should be more effective running the ball. Glenn and Lucky, trying to bring thunder and lightning to the running game, combined for 182 yards in the spring game.

But doing it against the team's second- and third-stringers is one thing. Doing it against the likes of Southern California and Texas will be another.

The returning receivers are depend-



Zac Taylor Photo by Brian Bahr/Getty Images



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 96.0 ypg rushing (12th Big 12/107th NCAA), 224.3 ypg passing (5th/54th), 320.3 ypg total offense (11th/96th), 24.7 ppg (8th/67th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Zac Taylor*	Sr.	All-conference candidate should flourish in second year.	Harrison Beck, So.
RB	Marlon Lucky	So.	Will have hands full trying to keep spot away from Glenn.	Cody Glenn, So.
FB	Dane Todd*	Sr.	Solid blocker is improving as receiver.	Grant Miller, Sr.
WR	Terrence Nunn*	Jr.	Big-play receiver in spite of standing just 6-0.	Frantz Hardy, Jr.
WR	Nate Swift*	So.	Hopes to build on breakout season in 2005.	Todd Peterson, So.
TE	J.B. Phillips*	Jr.	Great insurance if Herian not recovered from broken leg.	Matt Herian, Sr.
LT	Chris Patrick	Jr.	Former defender made late impact in 2005.	Lydon Murtha, So.
LG	Andy Christensen	So.	Ready to make up for season lost to injury.	Greg Austin, So.
C	Kurt Mann*	Sr.	Three-year starter in the middle.	Andy Christensen, So.
RG	Mike Huff	So.	Solid run blocker who must refine pass blocking skills.	Greg Austin, Sr.
RT	Matt Slauson*	So.	Has size (6-5, 345 pounds) to be dominating force.	Victory Haines, Jr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 124.3 ypg rushing (5th Big 12/26th), 207.9 ypg passing (3rd/43rd), 332.2 ypg total defense (4th/26th), 21.0 ppg (4th/25th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Adam Carriker*	Sr.	Has chance to be NU's best since Grant Wistrom.	Zach Potter, So.
DT	Ola Dagunduro	Sr.	Makes move from key reserve to starter.	Ndamukong Suh, So.
DT	Barry Cryer	Sr.	Made solid progress in the spring.	Ty Steinkuhler, So.
DE	Jay Moore*	Sr.	Teams with Carriker to form imposing tandem.	Barry Turner, So.
LB	Stewart Bradley	Sr.	Ready to pick up where he left off before knee injury.	Lance Brandenburg, Jr.
LB	Corey McKeon*	Jr.	Emotional leader of Nebraska defense.	Phillip Dillard, So.
LB	Steve Octavien	Jr.	Has ability to be impact player at weakside spot.	Bo Ruud, Jr.*
CB	Zackary Bowman*	Sr.	Lived up to hype with strong late-season surge.	Andre Jones, Jr.
CB	Cortney Grixby*	Jr.	Undersized ... but all he does is makes big plays.	Titus Brothers, Jr.
SS	Tierre Green*	Jr.	Started seven games at corner; shifts to fill pressing need.	Ben Eisenhart, Jr.
FS	Andrew Shanle	Sr.	Must step up after playing reserve role in the past.	Brandon Rigoni, Sr.

*Returning starter

able, with Nate Swift and Terrence Nunn combining for 88 receptions, including 14 touchdowns, last season. Several highly regarded recruits are expected to contend for playing time.

Big-play tight end Matt Herian appears on track to return from the broken leg he suffered in 2004.

Still, the success of this unit depends on the continued development of quarterback Zac Taylor.

Taylor made great strides in his first season as a starter, going from unproven junior college transfer to record-setter. He threw for 779 of his single-season school record 2,653 yards in directing the three-game winning streak that closed the 2005 season.

He'll begin his senior season as a potential candidate for all-conference honors.

"He needs to take the next step," Callahan said. "He will have to take on a new role, go to the line, establish the fronts, the blocking schemes, identify the coverages. I believe he can get to that point, make the next step, be a great communicator.

"I'm anxious to watch him make the next step, make the plays off what he sees. It's tough, but the great ones can do that."

DEFENSE

Coordinator Kevin Cosgrove isn't mincing words about the potential of his 2006 unit.

"I think this could be as good a group as I've ever had," Cosgrove said.

A solid 1-2 punch at defensive end, a deep group of linebackers and experi-

ence at the corners are reasons for Cosgrove's optimism. The Huskers have seven starters back from a defense that ranked in the top 30 nationally in three of the four major NCAA statistical categories.

"I'm excited about the group I have," Cosgrove said. "We've got to continue to get better. We're nowhere near where we're going to be."

That's saying something given where the defense has come in two seasons under Cosgrove. He and his unit caught plenty of flak for the 2004 flop that saw the Huskers suffer through their first losing season in more than four decades.

The defense rebounded last season, and carried the offense through a 5-1 start. After surrendering 112 points in consecu-



D.J. Jones, OL

Ranked as the highest high school prospect in Nebraska's class and the top player in the state of Nebraska for 2006, Jones is a monster of a man. Standing at 6-6 and 300 pounds, he has a great frame to work with and a motor that never stops. He gets up field easily with his blocks and he gives great effort on every play. He committed early in the recruiting process to the Huskers, locking up the state borders once again in 2006.



Menelik Holt, WR

To run the West Coast offense, Nebraska needs taller, more physical receivers and that's exactly what Holt is. He is 6-3 and 210 pounds, and while he might not be the fastest out there, he does run great routes and has soft hands. Both are vital in Bill Callahan's offensive scheme. He played for one of the top programs in San Diego, so he's used to winning, which is something he hopes to continue in Lincoln.



Cruz Barrett, OL

Barrett first impressed coaches at the Tallahassee NIKE Training Camp and after that schools like Nebraska jumped in on him. The appeal of playing early for one of the top teams in the Big 12 was too much to pass up. He turned down offers from Florida and Florida State and with his powerful frame could be an immediate impact kid.



Keith Williams, OL

Williams admittedly isn't a finished product by any means, but when you're 6-5 and 310 pounds, you have a lot to work with. Williams out of Florissant (Mo.) McCluer North was heavily recruited by many of the top programs in the Big 10 and Big 12 based on potential. If he can get into great football shape, get stronger and learn more technique, then he might be a heck of a steal for the Huskers. He has a lot of good things to work with.

Committments	22
Average Stars	3.27
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	0
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	7
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	14
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	1
Total Stars	72
National Rank: 20	Big 12: 3

2007 NEEDS

The Huskers need to land a high-level quarterback after missing in the 2006 class. Nebraska also hopes to land at least four high school linebackers because the Blackshirts are running low on young talent at the position. And with two older cornerbacks in place, a young corner or two is vital.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ALLEN, Pierre	DE	6-5, 222	★★★	Denver	Jefferson
Rivals.com's No. 34 weakside defensive end. ... No. 12 recruit in Colorado. ... State basketball Player of the Year as a junior.					
ALLEN, Steve	LB	6-2, 230	★★★	Fresno, CA	Fresno CC
Rivals.com's No. 44 overall junior college recruit. ... Recorded 81 tackles and two sacks as a senior. ... Originally committed to Iowa State in 2003.					
BARETT, Cruz	OL	6-4, 314	★★★	Daytona Beach, FL	Mainland
Rivals.com's No. 31 offensive guard. ... No. 68 recruit in Florida. ... Two-year starter. ... Also played basketball.					
CULBERT, Major	ATH	5-11, 187	★★★	Harbor City, CA	Narbonne
Rivals.com's No. 39 athlete. ... No. 39 recruit in California. ... Rushed for 1,955 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior. ... Topped 1,000 rushing yards as a junior.					
HAINES, Victory	OL	6-7, 285	★★★	Ephraim, UT	Snow College
Rivals.com's No. 76 overall junior college recruit. ... Enrolled for the spring semester. ... Will be 23 years old at start of season.					
HENRY, Ricky	OL	6-3, 295	★★★	Omaha, NE	Burke
Rivals.com No. 9 center. ... No. 2 recruit in Nebraska. ... First commitment to the 2006 class. ... Two-time first-team All-State.					
HENRY, Will	WR	6-6, 195	★★★	El Paso, TX	Hanks
Caught 52 passes for 917 yards and 12 touchdowns as a senior. ... One of two of the tallest receivers to sign with Nebraska since 1974. ... First-team All-State.					
HOLT, Menelik	WR	6-3, 210	★★★	San Diego	St. Augustine
Rivals.com's No. 44 wide receiver. ... No. 49 recruit in California. ... Led his league with 790 receiving yards as a senior. ... Caught 62 passes including 13 touchdowns.					
JENSEN, Seth	DT	6-3, 275	★★★	Fort Morgan, CA	Fort Morgan
Rivals.com's No. 36 defensive tackle. ... No. 4 recruit in Colorado. ... Had 89 tackles as a senior including 4.5 sacks.					
JOHNSON, Brandon	DT	6-3, 312	★★★	Compton, CA	Compton CC
Rivals.com's No. 84 overall junior college recruit. ... Had 10 sacks and 79 tackles last year. ... Played for Lamoni (Ill.) Graceland in the NAIA before transferring to Compton CC.					
JONES, Andre	DB	6-0, 195	★★★★	Fresno, CA	Fresno City CC
Rivals.com's No. 4 overall junior college recruit. ... Had seven interceptions in two seasons. ... Returned 15 kickoffs from 392 yards. ... Originally signed with Kentucky in 2003. ... Played only three games for the Wildcats before injuring his knee.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
JONES, D.J.	OL	6-6, 300	★★★★	Omaha, NE	Central
Rivals.com's No. 16 offensive tackle. ... No. 1 recruit in Nebraska. ... Two-time first-team All-State.					
MARTIN, Ben	DE	6-4, 232	★★	Lincoln, NE	Southwest
Rivals.com's No. 6 recruit in Nebraska. ... First-team All-State. ... Had 66 tackles as a senior. ... Had six sacks as a junior. ... Helped team to undefeated regular season and the Class A state title game.					
MCNEILL, Mike	TE	6-4, 215	★★★	Kirkwood, MO	Kirkwood
Rivals.com's No. 38 tight end. ... No. 13 recruit in Missouri. ... Two-time first-team All-State in Class 6A. ... Caught 33 passes for 665 yards and four touchdowns as a senior.					
NICKS, Carl	OL	6-6, 320	★★★★	Salinas, CA	Hartnell JC
Rivals.com's No. 35 overall junior college recruit. ... Played for one season at New Mexico State after graduating from Salinas (Calif.) North. ... Played defensive tackle for NMSU.					
PURIFY, Maurice	WR	6-4, 210	★★★★	San Francisco	City College
Rivals.com's No. 17 overall junior college prospect. ... Caught 68 passes for 1,318 yards and 19 touchdowns in 2005 at SFCC. ... As a freshman, had 444 receiving yards and 11 touchdowns.					
SMITH, Mike	DE	6-6, 255	★★★★	Las Vegas	Palo Verde
Rivals.com's No. 25 weakside defensive end. ... No. 5 recruit in Nevada. ... First Nebraska signee from Nevada since 1982. ... Had five sacks as a senior. ... Also played tight end. ... Second team All-State.					
THENARSE, Ricky	ATH	6-0, 175	★★★★	Los Angeles	Jordan
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 15 athlete. ... No. 20 recruit in California. ... Rushed for 1,344 yards and 10 touchdowns on 112 carries. ... Also caught five touchdown passes. ... Had 153 tackles and an interception on defense.					
WEST, Anthony	ATH	6-0, 195	★★★	San Diego	Point Loma
Rushed for 1,320 yards and 14 touchdowns as a senior. ... Added 341 receiving yards and four touchdown catches.					
WILLIAMS, Keith	OL	6-5, 310	★★★	Florissant, MO	McCluer
Rivals.com's No. 55 offensive tackle. ... No. 15 recruit in Missouri. ... Also played defensive tackle.					
WILSON, Kenny	RB	6-0, 220	★★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler Co. CC
Rivals.com's No. 7 overall junior college recruit. ... Rushed for 1,189 yards and 16 touchdowns on 211 carries as a senior.					
YOUNG, Corey	DB	6-0, 194	★★★	Omaha, NE	Millard North
Rivals.com's No. 58 safety. ... No. 4 recruit in Nebraska. ... First-team All-State.					

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
7	JORDAN ADAMS	S	6-2	200	Jr.	Santee, CA	89	KEVIN LUHRS	DE	6-1	260	Jr.	Omaha
93	JORDAN ALEGRIA	PK	6-1	210	Fr	North Platte	50	KURT MANN	C	6-4	290	Sr	Grand Island
65	GREG AUSTIN	OL	6-1	290	Sr	Cypress, TX	55	NATHAN MCCBRIDE	LS	6-1	205	Fr	Scottsdale, AZ
3	HARRISON BECK	QB	6-2	215	So	Clearwater, FL	13	COREY MCKEON	LB	6-1	225	Jr	Naperville, IL
52	BRYAN BENZEL	LS	6-2	255	Fr	Alliance	33	GRANT MILLER	FB	6-0	225	Sr	Peabody, MA
48	ADAM BLANKENSHIP	DE	6-2	245	So	Tulsa, OK	58	DONTRELL MOORE	LB	6-2	235	Sr	Thibodaux, LA
1	ZACKARY BOWMAN	CB	6-2	195	Sr	Anchorage, AK	44	JAY MOORE	DE	6-4	280	Sr	Elkhorn
34	STEWART BRADLEY	LB	6-4	245	Sr	Salt Lake City, UT	81	JOSH MUELLER	TE	6-5	260	Jr	Columbus
40	LANCE BRANDENBURGH	LB	6-1	230	Jr	Overland Park	84	GRANT MULKEY	WR	5-11	185	Sr	Arlington, TX
23	CHRIS BROOKS	WR	6-2	200	So	St. Louis, MO	76	LYDON MURTHA	OL	6-7	315	So	Hutchinson, MN
21	TITUS BROTHERS	DB	5-11	190	Jr	San Antonio, TX	83	TERRENCE NUNN	WR	6-0	185	So	Houston, TX
59	BRETT BYFORD	OL	6-3	305	Jr	Hartselle, AL	33	MATT O'HANLON	DB	5-11	200	So	Bellevue
82	WES CAMMACK	WR	5-11	190	Fr	DeWitt	82	T.J. O'LEARY	LS	6-1	250	So	Omaha
90	ADAM CARRIKER	DE	6-6	295	Sr	Kennewick, WA	52	MARK O'SHEA	LB	5-11	225	Sr	Dallas, TX
62	ANDY CHRISTENSEN	OL	6-3	300	So	Bennington	15	STEVE OCTAVIEN	LB	6-0	240	Jr	Naples, FL
29	JORDAN CONGDON	PK	5-11	175	So	San Diego, CA	45	WILL OTTO	FB	5-11	235	Sr	Fullerton, CA
45	NICK COVEY	LB	6-2	235	Fr	Glendale, AZ	78	BROCK PASTEUR	OL	6-6	290	Jr	Orlando, FL
94	BARRY CRYER	DL	6-2	280	Sr	Martinez, LA	54	CHRIS PATRICK	OL	6-4	290	Jr	Ithaca, MI
54	OLA DAGUNDURO	DL	6-2	300	Sr	Inglewood, CA	17	TODD PETERSON	WR/P	6-4	210	So	Grand Island
15	BEAU DAVIS	QB	6-4	185	So	Venice, CA	85	J.B. PHILLIPS	TE	6-3	250	Jr	Colleyville, TX
38	PHILLIP DILLARD	LB	6-1	250	So	Tulsa, OK	68	JORDAN PICOU	OL	6-2	300	Jr	Rialto, CA
46	BEN EISENHART	DB	5-11	200	Jr	Culbertson	72	RODNEY PICOU	OL	6-4	300	Fr	Moreno Valley, CA
26	DAN ERICKSON	WR/S	6-1	195	Jr	Omaha	98	ZACH POTTER	DE	6-7	275	So	Omaha
47	PAUL FARINO	FB	6-0	270	Fr	East Meadow, NY	86	ANDY POULOSKY	DE	6-2	260	Jr	Ponca
28	ISAIAH FLUELEN	WR	6-0	185	Sr	Ramstein, Germany	85	THOMAS RICE	DE	6-1	240	Jr	Lincoln
57	CONAN FREDINBURG	OL	6-7	310	Fr	Sioux Falls, SD	24	BRANDON RIGONTI	SS	5-6	185	Sr	Lincoln
8	JOE GANZ	QB	6-1	200	So	Palos Heights, IL	63	CRAIG ROARK	DL	6-2	300	Fr	Ada, OK
18	TRAVIS GINGERY	DB	5-10	190	Jr	Lincoln	51	BO RUUD	LB	6-3	230	Jr	Lincoln
39	DAN GLASSMAN	TE	6-4	245	Fr	Omaha	37	MIKE SAMPOGNA	IB	5-10	190	So	Chicago, IL
34	CODY GLENN	IB	6-0	230	So	Rusk, TX	48	ANDY SAND	TE	6-2	225	Jr	Lincoln
30	TIERRE GREEN	S	6-1	200	Jr	Omaha	42	MATT SENSKE	FB	6-3	240	Jr	Bellevue
2	CORTNEY GRIKBY	CB	5-9	170	Jr	Omaha	8	ANDREW SHANLE	S	6-1	210	Sr	St. Edward
75	VICTORY HAINES	OL	6-7	285	Jr	Logan, UT	88	CLAYTON SIEVERS	TE	6-4	240	So	Elkhorn
7	FRANTZ HARDY	WR	6-1	180	Jr	Miami, FL	70	MATT SLAUSON	OL	6-5	335	So	Colorado Springs, CO
35	DAVID HARVEY	TE	6-4	245	Fr	LaPlata, MD	80	TYRELL SPAIN	WR	6-3	190	Jr	San Diego, CA
11	MATT HERIAN	TE	6-5	245	Sr	Pierce	43	TY STEINKUHLER	DL	6-3	275	So	Lincoln
67	JACOB HICKMAN	OL	6-4	280	Fr	Bakersfield, CA	77	NDAMUKONG SUH	DE	6-4	320	So	Portland, OR
86	SEAN HILL	TE	6-3	255	Jr	Lisle, IL	84	TONY SULLIVAN	DE	6-3	235	Jr	Wahoo
61	MIKE HUFF	OL	6-4	305	So	Ralston	87	NATE SWIFT	WR	6-2	195	So	Hutchinson, MN
32	BRANDON JACKSON	IB	5-11	200	Jr	Horn Lake, MS	13	ZAC TAYLOR	QB	6-2	210	Sr	Norman, OK
23	LEON JACKSON	IB	6-1	210	So	Pasco, WA	89	HUNTER TEAFATILLER	TE	6-3	220	So	Kingsburg, CA
47	ANDY KADANY	LB	6-0	225	Sr	Seward	97	DAN TITCHENER	P	6-0	195	So	Cheyenne, WY
92	LANE KELLY	LS	6-4	270	Sr	Omaha	41	DANE TODD	FB	5-11	235	Sr	Lincoln
19	TYLER KESTER	P	6-1	200	Jr	Clearwater	10	JUSTIN TOMERLIN	TE	6-6	265	So	San Clemente, CA
36	THOMAS LAWSON	IB/FB	6-0	230	So	Parker, CO	99	BARRY TURNER	DL	6-3	250	So	Antioch, TN
35	CHRIS LEFLORE	CB	5-10	205	Jr	Omaha	59	BRIAN VOGES	LB	6-2	225	Jr	Lincoln
74	NEWTON LINGENFELTER	OL	6-5	280	Sr	Flairview	98	JAKE WESCH	PK	6-1	200	So	North Bend
20	MARLON LUCKY	IB	6-0	210	So	North Hollywood, CA	28	BRYAN WILSON	DB	6-1	200	Jr	Granada Hills, CA
91	ERIC LUESHEN	PK	6-2	190	Jr	Pierce	53	TYLER WORTMAN	LB	6-3	230	So	Grand Island

Harrison Beck missed six practices and had to sit out the spring game with a sore shoulder, but he'll likely start fall camp battling Joe Ganz for the backup quarterback spot.

"I feel confident he'll make that (practice time) up in a heartbeat as we get into training camp," coach Bill Callahan said. "He's a young football player. He's still a freshman. Some people have a hard time understanding that."

In addition to the shoulder problem, Beck injured his hamstring in the spring's first major scrimmage. Two MRIs performed on Beck's shoulder revealed no tears, and doctors recommended rest and rehabilitation.

"Physically speaking, he did lose some reps," Callahan said.

"We got a half a spring out of him. He had continued to improve. We wanted to see him more in pressure situations, and unfortunately, it didn't work out."

Beck appeared in two games as a freshman, completing one of 10 passes with an interception. His one completion, rescued Nebraska in a come-from-behind victory over Kansas State.

"I'm still confident he'll still come through for us," Callahan said. "There is no doubt in my mind."

• Senior tight end Matt Herian, on schedule to return for the 2006 season, hasn't played since midway through the 2004 season after suffering a broken leg.

The fracture of both his tibia and fibula was so bad that it required two surgeries to repair. Herian, who has 53 career receptions for more than 1,000 yards, redshirted last season.

He said his progress in the spring was slowed by a hamstring injury, not the leg.

"Through winter conditioning I was doing fine until I tweaked the hamstring," said Herian, who saw some action in the spring game. "Everything was looking just as good as it was before. I was happy with my progress up until that point."

• Dan Titchener emerged as the likely successor to Sam Koch, the punter who was as valuable as any Husker in 2005, averaging a school-record 46.5 yards per punt. Titchener, a walk-on from Cheyenne, Wyo., has never punted in a college game, like the other candidates for the job.

(8-4, 4-4)

W	Maine	25-7
W	Wake Forest	31-3
W	Pittsburgh	7-6
W	Iowa State	20T 27-20
L	Texas Tech	31-34
W	at Baylor	23-14
L	at Missouri	24-41
L	Oklahoma	24-31
L	at Kansas	15-40
W	Kansas State	27-25
W	at Colorado	30-3
	Alamo Bowl	
W	Michigan	32-28

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Taylor Beck	12	115.94	430	237	12	55.1	2653	19	73	221.1
	2	7.64	10	1	1	10.0	21	0	21	10.5

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Ross	12	225	952	70	882	3.9	5	57	73.5
Glenn	7	45	132	1	131	2.9	4	10	18.7
Lucky	12	43	139	10	129	3.0	0	11	10.8

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Swift	12	45	641	14.2	7	34	53.4
Nunn	12	43	495	11.5	7	52	41.2
Ross	12	43	392	9.1	3	70	32.7

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: McKeon 98, Bullocks 83, Ruud 80
Interceptions: McKeon 3, Bowman 2, eight with 1
Sacks: Carriker 9.5, McKeon 7, Smith 6, Turner 7
Tackles for loss: McKeon 22, Carriker 17, Moore 14, Smith 13



COREY MCKEON

Ruud, who started 10 games last season before breaking his arm. Another starter on the mend, strongside linebacker Stewart Bradley, is expected to battle Lance Brandenburg for playing time, while fiery Corey McKeon holds down the middle.

The Huskers have experience at the corners in Cortney Grixby, who plays much bigger than his 5-9, 170-pound stature, and Zackary Bowman. Bowman finally lived up to his billing with a late-season showing that saw him emerge as the team leader with 11 pass breakups.

The major concern is filling holes in the middle.

The Huskers lost starting tackles Le Kevin Smith and Titus Adams, while safeties Daniel Bullocks and Blake Tiedtke also are gone. In Ola Dagunduro, Barry Cryer and Ndamukong Suh, Cosgrove appears to have a solid three-man rotation at the tackle spots.

The picture is cloudy at safety, where Tierre Green shifts from corner to fill the strong-side spot while Andrew Shanle, a backup the past three seasons, is the leading candidate at free safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jordan Congdon made 19 of 23 field goal attempts in earning Freshman All-America honors. He broke the single-season school record of 18 field goals set by Kris Brown.

Cortney Grixby and Terrence Nunn give Nebraska a solid punt return game — Nebraska finished 17th nationally with a 12.9-yard average in 2005. The Huskers need to beef up their kick

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Zac Taylor

Went from being an unknown quantity at the start of the season to a boot-tough leader of the offense by the end. ... Set single-season school records for passing yards (2,653), completions (237) and attempts (430) in addition to single-game marks for passing yards (431), completions (36), attempts (55) and total offense (433). ... Finished with a flourish, throwing seven touchdown passes in season-ending three-game winning streak.



EMERGING STAR

LB Steve Octavien

Strong showing in spring indicates he's back from the broken leg he suffered in the second quarter of the season opener. ... Had impressive debut, making four tackles, including two for loss, in the first quarter against Maine. ... Earned starting spot at weakside linebacker in spring of 2005, stamping himself as player with impact potential.



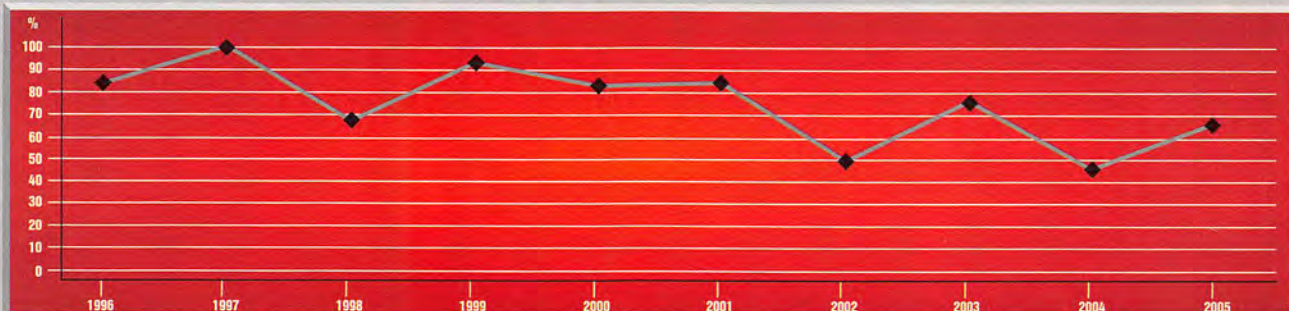
TOP NEWCOMER

CB Andre Jones

Expected to provide immediate help, much like Zackary Bowman did last season, at a position lacking depth. ... Earned five-star rating from Rivals.com and ranked as the fourth-best junior college prospect regardless of position last season. ... As a sophomore at Fresno City (Calif.) Community College, finished with 54 tackles, two interceptions and 13 pass breakups. Also returned 15 kickoffs for 392 yards.



Nebraska's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

ADAM CARRIKER



Photo by John Williamson

Bigger, Faster ... Ready to Dominate

Nebraska linebacker Corey McKeon has a warning for opponents who line up opposite Husker defensive end Adam Carriker this season.

"The things he did on the field last year," McKeon said, "are nothing compared to what he'll do this year."

That's saying something, considering Carriker played at an All-Big 12 level last season when he tied for the conference lead with 9.5 sacks. Of his 43 tackles, 17 produced losses totaling 96 yards. He also registered a team-high 19 quarterback hurries.

Impressive numbers, but not as eye-catching as these two: 295 and 4.68.

The first is Carriker's weight. He added 15 pounds to his 6-6 frame during the offseason. Guys that weigh 295 pounds shouldn't be able to run 40 yards in 4.68 seconds. But that's what Carriker did during winter conditioning.

"He's about as physically impressive an end as I've been around," defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove said. "He's done a great job working out, getting bigger, getting stronger. He's really changed his body around in just a short period of time."

Carriker changed his diet during the offseason, forsaking fast food for chicken breasts and fruit. That allowed him to add mass without sacrificing speed.

"The coaches always want you to be as big as you can possibly be without losing any speed," Carriker said. "I've been able to get faster and put on the weight. I just worked my butt off."

That's never been an issue with Carriker, the team's Lifter of the Year in 2004. What did change last season was Carriker remained healthy after battling an ankle injury in 2003 and 2004.

His play last season earned him the team's Defensive Player of the Year award and left Carriker flirting with the idea of turning professional. In the end, the Kennewick, Wash., native realized that the decision to return to Nebraska was really no decision at all.

"I grew up wanting to play football here," Carriker said. "I never really wanted to leave early. It entered my mind, but it was never really a serious thought."

Carriker wants to lead Nebraska to a Big 12 championship and a BCS game. The last time that happened was 1999, when Carriker was a quarterback in high school.

"We have the team that can do it," Carriker said. "A lot of teams can say that. But you honestly have to have the ability and the personnel to do it, and we do."

returns (78th national ranking), and must find a replacement for record-setting punter Sam Koch.

Koch, a Ray Guy Award semifinalist, averaged a single-season school record 46.5 yards per punt while dropping 29 of 71 kicks inside the 20-yard line.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The fans are excited about a long-awaited meeting with Southern California and a visit by defending national champion Texas on Oct. 21. But it's the three other October games that ultimately could prove pivotal.

Each is on the road — Oct. 7 at Iowa State, Oct. 14 at Kansas State and Oct. 28 at Oklahoma State. Nebraska lost in its last visits to those venues, and you can bet Iowa State and Kansas State will be eager to avenge close losses to the Huskers in Lincoln last season.

Other than USC, the non-conference schedule is soft with home games against Louisiana Tech, Nicholls State and Troy. If the Huskers can survive October, they'll have a chance to finish strong with home games against Missouri and Colorado sandwiched around a trip to Texas A&M.

— Steve Pivovar

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 LOUISIANA TECH

Sept. 9 NICHOLLS STATE

Sept. 16 at USC

Sept. 23 TROY

Sept. 30 KANSAS

Oct. 7 at Iowa State

Oct. 14 at Kansas State

Oct. 21 TEXAS

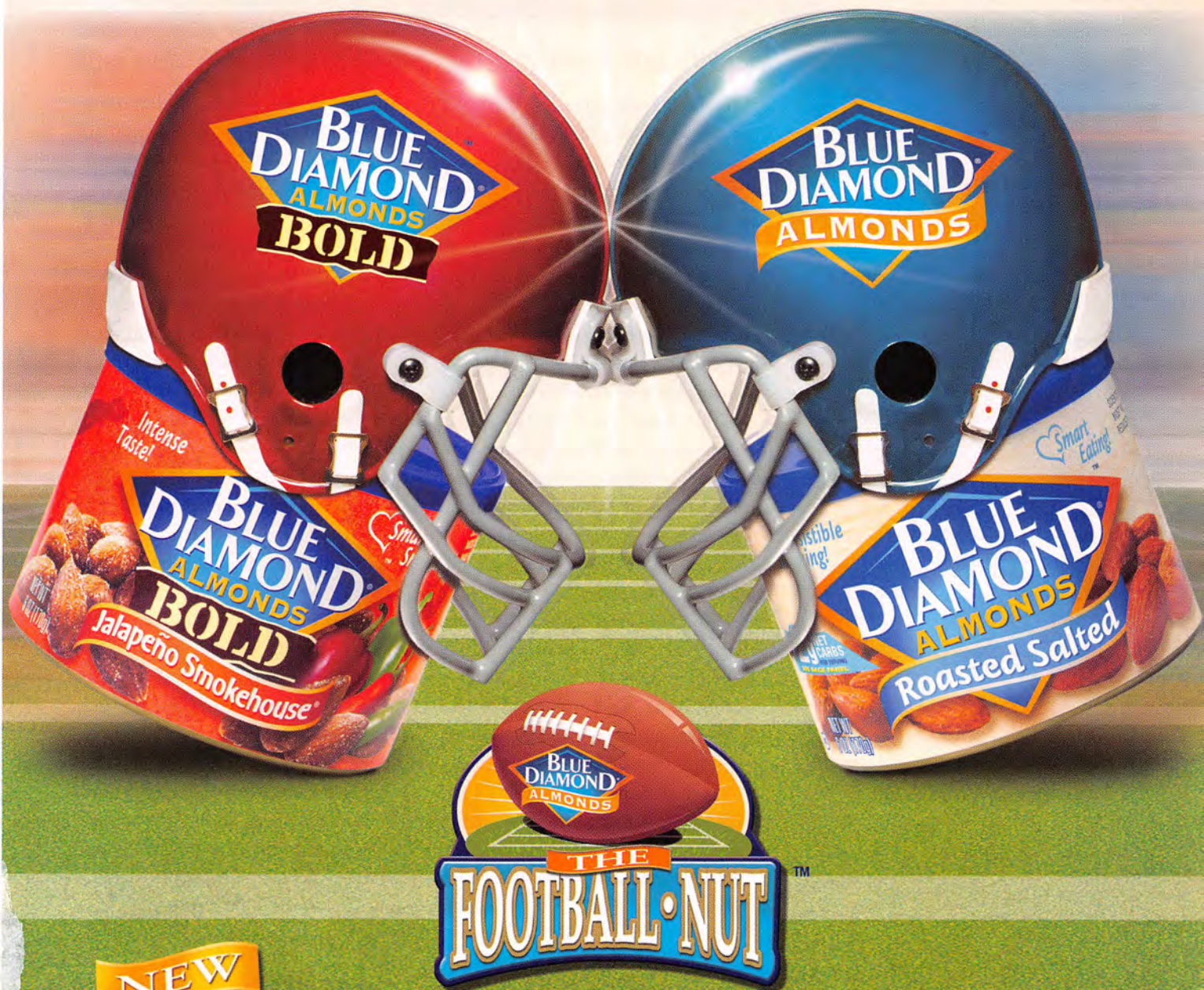
Oct. 28 at Oklahoma State

Nov. 4 MISSOURI

Nov. 11 at Texas A&M

Nov. 24 COLORADO

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SOONERS

For more coverage of the Sooners, visit www.oklahoma.rivals.com

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AT A GLANCE

2005

8-4 overall, 6-2 Big 12 (T-2nd, South)

COACH

Bob Stoops — At Oklahoma and overall:
75-16 overall, 7 years

RETURNING STARTERS

13; 4 offense, 8 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB Adrian Peterson, QB Rhett Bomar,
LB Rufus Alexander, CB Reggie Smith,
DE C.J. Ah You, CB D.J. Wolfe, LT Chris
Messner, WR Malcolm Kelly

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Adrian Peterson is healthier than he has
ever been at OU, which is scary consider-
ing he has already rushed for more than
3,000 yards. QB Rhett Bomar has always
been tough as nails, and now he's wiser.
As usual, Sooners are loaded at linebacker.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

If the starters can't stay healthy, offen-
sive line depth is a concern. Wide receiver
position is thin for the first time in sever-
al seasons. A non-conference game at
Oregon won't be easy, and the Ducks are
looking to avenge last season's Holiday
Bowl loss to the Sooners.

KEY LOSSES

LG Kelvin Chaisson, RG Chris Chester,
LT Davin Joseph, FB J.D. Runnels,
WR Travis Wilson

OVERVIEW

This year's talent pool is young; OU has
just eight scholarship seniors, only two
on offense. No matter. Following a strong
spring in which that young talent
received repetitions and no key players
suffered injuries, Oklahoma should be
back in the race for the Big 12 and
national titles.

Watch Out 'Horns, Sooners Want Their Title Back

Considering the obstacles Oklahoma
faced last year, it's painfully obvious why
the Sooners failed to play in the national
championship game for the first time
since the 2002 season.

OU had a Heisman Trophy winner
and a Heisman runner-up at quarterback
the entire millennium.

Last year, in stepped redshirt freshman
Rhett Bomar, a gutsy kid with a whole lot
of courage but zero experience.

In 2004, Sooners running back Adrian
Peterson became the first freshman to fin-
ish second in Heisman voting. Last sea-
son, he battled an Achilles' problem and
a high ankle sprain that would have kept
mere mortals out of the lineup a mini-
mum of two months.

Peterson still managed 1,104 yards
rushing with 14 touchdowns despite
missing parts or all of four games.

A total of 41 players combined to miss
full games because of injuries, and seven oth-
ers partially missed games (at least one half).

Adding to the degree of difficulty, the
Sooners had the nation's toughest sched-
ule and faced seven bowl teams who went
6-1 in the postseason — this after losing
10 players to the NFL Draft, including
six in the first three rounds.

All this negativity led to some negative
results.

But life is pretty good when a second-
place tie in the Big 12 South, a No. 22
final ranking and a 17-14 victory over
No. 6 Oregon in the Holiday Bowl are
categorized as a rebuilding year.

All those hard knocks figure to have
the Sooners brushing themselves off and

returning to the national prominence
they enjoyed in their seven previous
seasons under coach Bob Stoops (75-16).

With Texas quarterback Vince Young
kind enough to leave Austin a year early,
OU is primed to reclaim the top spot in the
mighty Big 12 South once again, a position
it occupied four of the previous five seasons.

In addition to new faces on the field, there
are some new faces on the coaching staff.

Offensive coordinator and quarter-
backs coach Chuck Long left before last
year's Holiday Bowl to become head
coach at San Diego State.

Receivers coach and passing game
coordinator Darrell Wyatt left to become
an assistant with the Minnesota Vikings.

Former co-offensive coordinator and
offensive line coach Kevin Wilson replaces
Long as offensive coordinator and also
will coach tight ends and fullbacks.

Former Northwestern offensive line
coach James Patton is now OU's offensive
line coach, replacing Wilson. Wilson and
Patton enjoyed tremendous success togeth-
er at Northwestern in 2001 when they led
the Big Ten Conference in total offense.

Former OU quarterback Josh Heupel,
runner-up for the 2000 Heisman, returns
to coach the quarterbacks.

OFFENSE

While the offense was balanced last
year (2,131 passing yards, 2,130 rush-
ing), it certainly wasn't potent.

The Sooners' 4,261 total yards were by
far the fewest since coach Bob Stoops
arrived in 1999, and they ranked just 71st
nationally. Passing ranked 94th and rush-



Adrian Peterson Photo by John Williamson



RHETT BOMAR

Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 177.5 ypg rushing (4th in Big 12/33rd NCAA), 177.6 ypg passing (11th/94th), 355.1 ypg total offense (5th/71st), 28.9 ppg (6th/56th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Rhett Bomar*	So.	Always confident; now, is experienced and smarter.	Joey Halzle, So.
RB	Adrian Peterson*	Jr.	Healthy again, so here comes a run for the Heisman.	Allen Patrick, Jr.
RB	Dane Zaslau	Jr.	He'll have a tough chore replacing J.D. Runnels.	Matt Clapp, So.
WR	Paul Thompson	Sr.	Former quarterback should be solid receiver.	Fred Strong, So.
WR	Malcolm Kelly*	So.	Big target makes it look easy (33 catches in '05).	Quentin Chaney, So.
TE	Joe Jon Finley	Jr.	Athletic; must have a presence on the field.	Brody Eldridge, Fr.
LT	Chris Messner*	Sr.	Returning starter and line leader.	George Robinson, So.
LG	George Robinson	So.	Shed 50 pounds and still a mountain.	Ben Barresi, Fr.
C	Jon Cooper	So.	Recovering from a broken ankle.	J.D. Quinn, So.
RG	Brian Simmons	Fr.	Makes the move over from defensive tackle.	Sherrone Moore, Jr.
RT	Brannon Braxton	So.	Big potential after playing in every game last year.	Brandon Walker, Jr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 80.6 ypg rushing (2nd Big 12/4th NCAA), 216.1 ypg passing (5th/56th), 306.7 total defense (3rd/13th), 23.1 ppg (6th/37th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Larry Birdine	Sr.	Big-time player coming off biceps injury.	John Williams, Jr.
DT	Carl Pendleton*	Jr.	Two-year starter sat out spring ball.	Steven Coleman, Jr.
DT	Cory Bennett	So.	Coaches love his potential and his quickness.	DeMarcus Granger, Fr.
DE	Calvin Thibodeaux*	Sr.	10 sacks last season; 17 tackles for loss.	C.J. Ah You, Sr.*
LB	Demario Pleasant	Jr.	Had terrific spring practice; ready to break out?	Ryan Reynolds, So.
LB	Zach Latimer*	Sr.	Coming back from shoulder surgery.	Curtis Lofton, So.
LB	Rufus Alexander*	Sr.	Playmaker deluxe ... another OU Butkus winner?	Lewis Baker, So.*
CB	Reggie Smith*	So.	Emerging star at new, more comfortable, position.	Marcus Walker, Jr.
CB	D.J. Wolfe*	Jr.	Former RB becoming solid CB.	Brian Jackson, Fr.
SS	Jason Carter	Sr.	Ready to step to the forefront.	Keenan Clayton, Fr.
FS	Darien Williams	Jr.	Earns his way into the lineup full time.	Nic Harris, So.

*Returning starter

ing ranked 33rd. Scoring also was the lowest in the Stoops era, ranking 56th at 26.9 points per game.

There are two reasonable explanations: 1) Peterson, who finished second in the Heisman Trophy balloting in 2004, was hurt. 2) Bomar was raw.

Now Peterson is healthier than he has ever been since enrolling in college. Bomar is a year wiser and figures to be less inclined to plow over oncoming line-backers and strong safeties. He had 10 touchdown passes and 10 interceptions last season.

When Peterson needs a breather, junior Allen Patrick is a capable backup.

Critics are concerned with OU's offensive line, which lost four starters. Those within the program, however, are not in

a state of panic.

"We don't lack talent on the offensive line. We lack experience," said coordinator Kevin Wilson. "And I'd rather have it that way rather than the other way around."

Gone up front are starting linemen Davin Joseph, Chris Chester and Kelvin Chaisson, plus tight end James "Bubba" Moses and fullback J.D. Runnels.

Returning are tackle Chris Messner (10 starts), tackle Brannon Braxton (four), center Jon Cooper (two) and tight end Joe Jon Finley (two).

Three freshmen standouts return at receiver in Malcolm Kelly, Juquin Iglesias and Manuel Johnson. Former backup quarterback Paul Thompson is now a full-time receiver.

They will be under the tutelage of for-

mer tight ends coach Kevin Sumlin, who was promoted to co-offensive coordinator and passing coordinator and will now be in charge of receivers. He served as offensive coordinator/receivers coach in 2001-2002 at Texas A&M.

DEFENSE

As Oklahoma made its 39th bowl appearance last year, a defense that ranked fourth nationally against the run and 13th in total yardage led the way.

Good numbers for a unit in which several key players suffered injuries and others played out of position.

Not this year. Players will be primed for success by being in more natural positions.

Athletic sophomore Reggie Smith leads a solid secondary after switching from



Gerald McCoy, DT

McCoy was one of the nation's top five players and the top overall defensive tackle in the nation. At 6-4 and 305 pounds, he's bigger and stronger than Tommie Harris when he starred for the Sooners. But McCoy does have quickness that should remind people of Harris. He could come in and see action right away for OU.



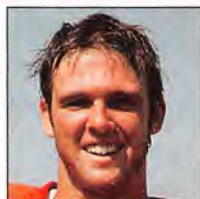
Curtis Bailey, OL

With the Sooners needing help along the offensive line, landing a massive body (6-7, 340) like Bailey was a welcome addition. If Bailey is in shape and prepared for college ball, he could see some action quickly at a number of spots on the offensive line.



Chris Brown, RB

There is no question that Adrian Peterson is the man at Oklahoma, but behind him the depth is razor thin, and that's where a guy like Brown comes in. Brown is expected to compete with several other freshmen running backs for early playing time and with his college-ready body, he might win that role.



Joey Halzle, QB

Oklahoma suddenly needed a backup quarterback when Paul Thompson's move to receiver became permanent, so the Sooners targeted Halzle, a junior college quarterback that could come in and participate in spring drills. His solid spring pushed quarterback Rhett Bomar some, and with OU still banged up on the offensive line a solid backup to Bomar is needed.

Commitments	28
Average Stars	3.54
★★★★★	1
★★★★☆	13
★★★☆☆	14
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	99
National Rank: 9	Big 12: 2

2007 NEEDS

Offensive line is always a need for the Sooners, and it will continue to be a big one in 2007. More depth at linebacker is needed, and help at the safety and cornerback spots are welcome. The Sooners are also hoping to hit a home run with a blue-chip quarterback, too.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
BAILEY, Curtis	OL	6-7, 340	★★★★★	Dallas	Carter
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 14 offensive tackle. ... No. 30 recruit in Texas. ... First-team All-State.					
BEAL, Jeremy	DE	6-2, 243	★★★★★	Carrollton, TX	Creekview
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 19 strongside defensive end. ... No. 26 recruit in Texas. ... Had 127 tackles, 19 for a loss as a senior.					
BEELE, Chase	OL	6-4, 275	★★★★	Jenks, OK	Jenks
Rivals.com's No. 22 offensive guard. ... No. 7 recruit in Oklahoma. ... National Merit Scholar semifinalist.					
BRADFORD, Sam	QB	6-4, 200	★★★★	Oklahoma City	PC North
Rivals.com's No. 12 pro-style quarterback. ... No. 6 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Passed for 2,422 yards and 19 touchdowns as a senior.					
BRANDON, Cory	OL	6-6, 265	★★★★★	Corsicana, TX	Corsican
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 10 offensive tackle. ... No. 17 recruit in Texas. ... First-team All-State.					
BROWN, Chris	RB	5-10, 192	★★★★★	Alexandria, LA	Alexandria
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 17 running back. ... No. 8 recruit in Louisiana. ... Rushed for 1,685 yards and 22 touchdowns as a senior.					
CALEB, Brandon	WR	6-1, 194	★★★★	Fork Union, VA	FL Union Military
Rivals.com's No. 35 wide receiver. ... No. 12 recruit in Virginia. ... All-State wide receiver and linebacker.					
CARTER, Quinton	ATH	6-0, 185	★★★★	North Las Vegas, NV	Cheyenne
Rivals.com's No. 48 athlete. ... No. 3 recruit in Nevada.					
CROW, Brandon	LB	6-2, 215	★★★★	Comanche, OK	Comanche
Rivals.com's No. 17 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Led state with 244 tackles as a senior. ... Had four sacks and an interception in 2005.					
FRANKS, Dominique	DB	6-0, 178	★★★★★	Tulsa, OK	Union
Rivals.com's No. 24 cornerback. ... No. 4 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Intercepted seven passes as a senior and returned three for touchdowns. ... Returned three kickoffs for touchdowns.					
GRESHAM, Jermaine	TE	6-7, 230	★★★★★	Ardmore, OK	Ardmore
Rivals.com's No. 34 overall recruit. ... No. 1 tight end. ... No. 2 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Caught 70 passes for 1,205 yards and 24 touchdowns as a senior.					
HALZLE, Joey	QB	6-4, 215	★★★★	Huntington Beach, CA	Golden West
Rivals.com's No. 91 overall junior college recruit. ... Threw for 2,077 yards and 13 touchdowns in 10 games last season.					
JOHNSON, Tim	DE	6-5, 265	★★★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
Rivals.com's No. 72 overall junior college recruit. ... Did not play organized football until his junior year of high school.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
MACON, Pryce	DE	6-1, 258	★★★★	Corpus Christi, TX	Carroll
Rivals.com's No. 33 strongside defensive end. ... No. 54 recruit in Texas. ... Four-year starter. ... Had 5.5 sacks as a senior.					
MADU, Mossis	ATH	6-1, 190	★★★★	Norman, OK	Norman
Rivals.com's No. 45 athlete. ... No. 10 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Rushed for 1,513 yards and 25 touchdowns as a senior. ... Also had 242 receiving yards.					
MCCOY, Gerald	DT	6-4, 305	★★★★★	Oklahoma City	Southeast
Rivals.com's No. 4 overall recruit. ... No. 1 defensive tackle. ... Top recruit in Oklahoma. ... Parade All-American. ... USA Today National Defensive Player of the Year. ... Had 40 sacks as a junior and senior.					
MENSIK, Eric	TE	6-5, 231	★★★★	Rosenburg, TX	Terry
Rivals.com's No. 36 tight end. ... Caught 17 passes for 359 yards and four touchdowns as a senior.					
MOORE, Sherrone	OL	6-5, 300	★★★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler CC
Rivals.com's No. 33 overall junior college recruit. ... Enrolled for the spring semester.					
MURRAY, Demarco	RB	6-0, 183	★★★★★	Las Vegas	Bishop Gorman
Rivals.com's No. 35 overall recruit. ... No. 2 all-purpose back. ... No. 1 recruit in Nevada. ... Rushed for 1,947 yards and 27 touchdowns in 2005.					
NELSON, Jonathan	DB	6-1, 180	★★★★★	Mansfield, TX	Summit
Rivals.com's No. 19 cornerback. ... No. 23 recruit in Texas. ... Three-year starter.					
PATTERSON, Chris	LB	6-3, 220	★★★★★	Miami, OK	NE Okla. A&M
Rivals.com's No. 22 overall junior college recruit. ... First-team junior college All-American. ... Blocked three punts last season.					
ROARK, Chad	OL	6-2, 290	★★★★	Ada, OK	Ada
Rivals.com's No. 8 center. ... No. 9 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Enrolled for the spring semester.					
TABON, Daniel	ATH	6-3, 215	★★★★	Altus, OK	Altus
Rivals.com's No. 44 athlete. ... No. 5 recruit in Oklahoma.					
TAYLOR, Adrian	DT	6-5, 280	★★★★	Manfield, TX	Manfield
Rivals.com's No. 52 defensive tackle. ... No. 87 recruit in Texas. ... Three-year starter.					
TENNELL, Adron	WR	6-5, 200	★★★★★	Irving, TX	Irving
Rivals.com's No. 42 overall recruit. ... No. 3 wide receiver. ... No. 5 recruit in Texas. ... Had 1,000 yards receiving and 1,000 yards rushing as a senior.					
WALKER, Brandon	OL	6-3, 315	★★★★★	Coffeyville, KS	Coffeyville CC
Rivals.com's No. 12 overall junior college recruit. ... Junior college All-American.					
WILLIAMS, Malcolm	DB	5-10, 172	★★★★★	Grand Prairie, TX	S. Grand Prairie
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com No. 9 safety. ... No. 25 recruit in Texas. ... Had 10 interceptions in 2005.					
WILLIAMS, Trent	OL	6-5, 290	★★★★	Longview, TX	Longview
Rivals.com's No. 28 offensive guard. ... No. 63 recruit in Texas.					

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
99	C.J. AH YOU	DE	6-4	272	Sr	Highland, UT	2	BRIAN JACKSON	DB	6-1	190	Fr	De Soto, TX
42	RUFUS ALEXANDER	LB	6-1	231	Sr	Baton Rouge, LA	6	MANUEL JOHNSON	WR	5-11	176	So	Gilmer, TX
16	LEWIS BAKER	LB	6-2	210	Jr	Carrollton, TX	47	JONATHAN JORDAN	LB	5-11	217	Sr	Oklahoma City
65	BEN BARRESI	OL	6-5	312	Fr	Edmond	4	MALCOLM KELLY	WR	6-4	214	So	Longview, TX
97	CORY BENNETT	DT	6-2	275	So	San Antonio, TX	39	MIKE KNALL	P	5-9	182	So	Scottsdale, AZ
92	LARRY BIRDNE	DE	6-3	258	Sr	Lawton	46	ZACH LATIMER	LB	6-2	232	Sr	Denver, CO
78	BILLY BLACKARD	DT	6-3	281	Fr	Claremore	40	CURTIS LOFTON	LB	6-0	238	So	Kingfisher
7	RHETT BOMAR	QB	6-2	215	So	Grand Prairie, TX	16	HAYS MCEACHERN	QB	5-11	180	So	Austin, TX
27	GARRETT BOTHUN	WR	5-9	173	Jr	Rowlett, TX	79	CHRIS MESSNER	OL	6-6	280	Sr	Frederick
26	BRETT BOWERS	DB	5-11	194	So	Jacksonville, FL	89	CORDERO MOORE	DT	6-3	297	So	Mesquite, TX
76	BRANNDON BRAXTON	OL	6-6	318	So	Youngstown, OH	77	SHERRONE MOORE	OL	6-4	300	Jr	Derby, KS
6	JASON CARTER	DB	5-10	199	Sr	Tulsa	82	LAENAR NIXON	DE	6-3	214	Sr	Miami, FL
20	QUINTON CARTER	DB	6-0	185	Fr	Las Vegas, NV	23	ALLEN PATRICK	RB	6-0	195	Jr	Conway, SC
84	QUENTIN CHANEY	WR	6-5	208	So	Tulsa	68	CARL PENDLETON	DT	6-5	285	Jr	Sapulpa
34	MAIT CLAPP	FB	6-2	242	So	Phoenix, AZ	53	KYLE PETERSEN	LB	6-2	210	So	Plano, TX
22	KEENAN CLAYTON	DB	6-2	216	Fr	Sulphur Springs, TX	28	ADRIAN PETERSON	RB	6-2	215	Jr	Palestine, TX
90	STEVEN COLEMAN	DT	6-4	310	Jr	Dallas, TX	51	DEMARRIO PLEASANT	LB	6-2	225	Jr	Lewisville, TX
50	JON COOPER	OL	6-2	278	So	Fort Collins, CO	49	IAN PLEASANT	LB	5-11	216	Jr	Alexandria, VA
87	AARON CUMMINGS	TE	6-4	240	Fr	Marlow	63	J.D. QUINN	OL	6-3	296	So	Garland, TX
95	ALAN DAVIS	DE	6-2	250	So	Colleyville, TX	8	RYAN REYNOLDS	LB	6-2	230	So	Las Vegas, NV
30	DAN DIXON	DB	5-11	200	Sr	Tulsa	72	GEORGE ROBINSON	OL	6-5	332	So	Atlanta, GA
91	ALONZO DOTSON	DE	6-4	252	Jr	Alief, TX	30	LAMONT ROBINSON	LB	6-1	225	Fr	Salem, NJ
83	BRODY ELDRIDGE	TE	6-5	248	Fr	La Cygne, KS	71	CAMERON SCHACHT	OL	6-4	255	So	Coppell, TX
33	AUSTON ENGLISH	DE	6-3	250	So	Canadian, TX	74	BRIAN SIMMONS	OL	6-4	285	Fr	Raleigh, NC
80	RUSSELL ENGLISH	WR	5-8	170	So	Dallas, TX	3	REGGIE SMITH	DB	6-1	199	So	Edmond
19	JOE JON FINLEY	TE	6-6	244	Jr	Arlington, TX	81	FRED STRONG	WR	6-1	202	So	Austin, TX
96	DEMARCUS GRANGER	DT	6-3	294	Fr	Dallas, TX	58	CALVIN THIBODEAUX	DE	6-1	255	Sr	Houston, TX
54	CLINT GRESHAM	DS	6-3	215	So	Corpus Christi, TX	12	PAUL THOMPSON	WR	6-4	210	Sr	Leander, TX
21	JACOB GUTIERREZ	RB	5-6	186	Jr	San Antonio, TX	24	MARCUS WALKER	DB	5-10	197	Jr	Waco, TX
11	JOEY HALZLE	QB	6-4	201	So	Huntington Beach, CA	34	BEN WEYAND	DE	6-3	235	Fr	Frisco, TX
15	JERMAINE HARDISON	WR	6-3	209	Jr	Midwest City	66	JESSE WHITE	OL	6-0	287	Fr	Denver, CO
5	NIC HARRIS	DB	6-3	218	So	Alexandria, LA	41	DARIEN WILLIAMS	DB	5-10	197	Jr	Mesquite, TX
10	GARRETT HARTLEY	K	5-9	186	Jr	Southlake, TX	98	JOHN WILLIAMS	DE	6-5	260	Jr	Houston, TX
11	LENDY HOLMES	DB	6-0	196	So	Dallas, TX	25	D.J. WOLFE	DB	5-11	200	Jr	Lawton
17	ERIC HUGGINS	WR	6-3	200	Fr	Conway, SC	40	DANE ZASLAW	FB	6-0	242	Jr	Edmond
9	JUAQUIN IGLESIAS	WR	6-0	198	So	Killeen, TX							

Last season, three of OU's top seven receivers were true freshmen, including **Malcolm Kelly**, who led the team in receptions (33), yards (471) and touchdowns (two).

True freshman **Manuel Johnson** had the longest reception of the year (55 yards for a touchdown against rival Oklahoma State), and true freshman **Juaquin Iglesias** caught the game-winning touchdown in a double-overtime victory against Baylor.

• In 91 games under coach **Bob Stoops**, the Sooners have scored at least one touchdown in every game, held double-digit leads in 75 games and forced at least one turnover in 81 games. They also have at least one interception in 60 of their past 78 games.

• Though the Sooners lost several prominent full-time starters, they do return 26 players who started at least one game last season. They had just 17 such players in 2005.

• **Rhett Bomar's** 10 starts last year were the second most by a freshman Sooners quarterback (**Eric Moore** started 11 in 1995).

Bomar also had school freshman bests for completions (167), passing attempts (308), completion percentage (52.4) and touchdown passes (10).

In the last five games, Bomar threw for 1,008 yards with six touchdowns and three interceptions while completing 57 percent of his passes. In the prior seven games, he threw four touchdown passes and seven interceptions and completed 52 percent of his passes.

• For the second consecutive season, OU led the Big 12 Conference in attendance. The Sooners averaged 84,331 fans, good for ninth nationally. OU has sold out all 42 home games in the Bob Stoops era.

• In seven seasons under Stoops, the school has produced the top two career passing yardage leaders (**Jason White** and **Josh Heupel**), the top five career reception leaders (**Mark Clayton**, **Quentin Griffin**, **Trent Smith**, **Antwone Savage** and **Curtis Fagan**) and the fourth-ranked career rushing yardage leader (Griffin).

• The annual Red-White spring game drew 30,000 fans and was televised live on ESPN, drawing the highest rating of the 11 spring games televised in recent years. All other spring games were televised on ESPNU and many were tape-delayed.

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Bomar	12	113.48	308	167	10	54.2	2018	10	55	168.2
Thompson	10	69.83	26	11	1	42.3	109	0	22	10.9

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Peterson	11	221	1207	103	1104	5.0	14	84	100.4
K. Jones	11	86	313	33	280	3.3	4	17	25.5
Gutierrez	11	48	262	8	254	5.3	2	28	23.1

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Kelly	11	33	471	14.3	2	42	42.8
Wilson	9	25	310	12.4	1	27	34.4
Runnels	12	20	205	10.2	1	35	17.1

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Alexander 102, Latimer 84, Wolfe 65
Interceptions: Ingram 5, R. Smith 2, Wolfe 2
Sacks: Thibodeaux 10, Ah You 7, Alexander 5, Ingram 5
Tackles for loss: Alexander 17, Thibodeaux 17, Ah You 12, Ingram 12

(8-4, 6-2)

L	TCU	10-17
W	Tulsa	31-15
L	at UCLA	24-41
W	Kansas State	43-21
L	Texas	12-45
W	at Kansas	19-3
W	Baylor	20T 37-30
W	at Nebraska	31-24
W	Texas A&M	36-30
L	at Texas Tech	21-23
W	Oklahoma State	42-14
	Holiday Bowl	
W	Oregon	17-14



strong safety to cornerback. Junior D.J. Wolfe, who initially arrived as a running back, will man the other cornerback spot.

As usual, the Sooners are loaded at linebacker, and are led by senior Rufus Alexander, who led the team with 102 tackles, including 17 for loss, and nine quarterback hurries last season.

Defensive tackle looks solid with Carl Pendleton and Cory Bennett. Backups Steve Coleman and DeMarcus Granger offer strong relief.

But defensive end is where OU is overflowing in talent.

The Sooners have Big 12 Defensive Newcomer of the Year C.J. Ah You (seven sacks; three forced fumbles) and Calvin Thibodeaux (a team-high 10 sacks). Then there are Larry Birdine and John Williams, both returning from injuries.

Birdine likely would be in the NFL right now if he hadn't missed the entire regular season. He had seven sacks as a backup in 2004.

"I think we've got a chance to be really special up front," Stoops said, never one prone to hyperbole. "Not only up there, but across the board defensively."

OU coaches left spring practice wearing smiles for several reasons. No one was injured. Injured players from last season got a chance to heal. Inexperienced players got a chance to show what they can do, both offensively and defensively.

And quite frankly, players looked better.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Sooners must improve on some anemic special teams numbers. They ranked 105th nationally last season in kickoff returns (18.2 yards) and 80th in punt returns (7.4).

They're also looking for a punter. Returning starter Cody Freeby was kicked off the team in the spring for undisclosed reasons. There essentially could be an open tryout at punter with junior Mike Knall the leading candidate.

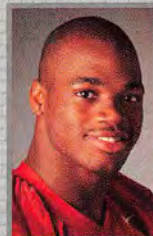
Gone is the player who gained acclaim by going unnoticed — the deep snapper.

The **BEST** & The **BRIGHTEST**

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Adrian Peterson

The nation's best running back is healthy and ready to return to national prominence after a frustrating sophomore season in which he battled injuries and wore a bulls-eye because of a freshman at quarterback. ... Peterson also plans to add to his repertoire by becoming more of a receiver out of the backfield. ... Has rushed for 3,033 yards in two seasons, averaging 5.4 per carry. ... Has rushed for 29 touchdowns.



EMERGING STAR

CB Reggie Smith

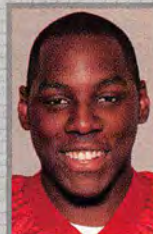
This standout athlete from Edmond (Okla.) Santa Fe High School came in with incredibly high expectations, which often tend to become unrealistic for local recruits in a football-crazed state. Still, Smith earned national All-Freshman honors last season, starting the final 10 games at strong safety. ... His overall talents will now be used at cornerback. ... Made 47 tackles last season, and intercepted two passes. ... Smith also could cause some damage as a kickoff and punt returner.



TOP NEWCOMER

OG Brian Simmons

This 6-4, 285-pound redshirt freshman arrived as a defensive tackle, but was switched to right guard during spring practice to help a depleted corps on that side of the ball. ... Simmons was not spectacular last spring, but his steady strides impressed some high-demand coaches. ... The Sooners could have more noticeable, high-profile newcomers, but none figure to carry the importance of the intelligent and savvy Simmons, who runs a 4.9-second 40-yard dash.



Oklahoma's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

LARRY BIRDINE



Photo by Kevin Recel/Icon SMI

Always Get a Good Answer From 'Bird'

After a practice or game, the eyes and ears of Oklahoma football coach Bob Stoops occasionally will wander to where defensive end Larry Birdine is surrounded by media.

"How you doing over there?" Stoops will yell. "Do I need to come over?"

Birdine will smile and say, "Naw, I'm good. I'm being cool."

Teammates refer to Birdine as "Bird." And, man, can this senior chirp.

Before leaving for the national championship game two years ago

against Southern California at the Orange Bowl, Birdine said the Trojans would be an average team if they didn't have Reggie Bush and referred to 2004 Heisman winner Matt Leinart as a "system quarterback."

Yes, USC players heard Birdine's remarks. Yes, they used them as motivation in a 55-19 demolition of the Sooners.

Despite the embarrassing loss, Birdine stood firm.

"I still don't regret what I said," Birdine said. "Deep down inside I still feel like we're the better team. I feel like I said what a lot of people felt. You've got to stand by your words."

Birdine feels it would be refreshing if there were more Larry Birdines.

"It would be good if a lot of people spoke their minds," Birdine said.

"A lot of people try to be too professional about things — the classy way to do things. But I feel like, hey, if you're just speaking the truth or speaking how you feel, it's a free country and you do what you want to do."

Nary a day passes when media types aren't tempted to bait Birdine with innocuous questions that often bring superlative responses.

It's what they've come to expect from the 6-4, 258-pound man who reads romance novels, enjoys watching figure skating and shaves his body. One Birdine ritual is to watch cartoons for several hours the night before games.

As a junior last season, Birdine tore the biceps muscle in his left arm during preseason practices and missed the entire regular season.

Though he would have been granted a medical redshirt and retained two years of eligibility, Birdine forfeited an entire year just to play in a 17-14 victory over Oregon in the Holiday Bowl.

Had Birdine been healthy all of last year, presumably he would have entered the NFL draft.

Instead, Stoops now has just one more season of keeping his eyes and ears open before Bird flies away.

Former walk-on Jacob Rice has departed, and redshirt freshman Clint Gresham is the leading candidate to be his replacement.

Return specialists Patrick and Reggie Smith could supply some fireworks if there's blocking up front. Junior kicker Garrett Hartley returns, but is just 15 of 23 on field-goal attempts in his career.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The Sooners' 2005 schedule easily ranked as the nation's most difficult.

In fact, there's a good chance that might have been the toughest overall schedule in history based on cumulative opposition. OU opponents last year were a combined 84-38 (68.9) against Division I-A teams.

Coach Bob Stoops has long favored playing at least one prominent non-conference opponent, and he has no intention of changing.

This year, OU plays host to Washington on Sept. 9 and travels to Oregon on Sept. 16. Future schedules include home-and-home series against Miami, Florida State, Tennessee and LSU.

— John Rohde

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	UAB
Sept. 9	WASHINGTON
Sept. 16	at Oregon
Sept. 23	MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 7	vs. Texas (Dallas)
Oct. 14	IOWA STATE
Oct. 21	COLORADO
Oct. 28	at Missouri
Nov. 4	at Texas A&M
Nov. 11	TEXAS TECH
Nov. 18	at Baylor
Nov. 25	at Oklahoma State

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AT A GLANCE

2005

4-7 overall, 1-7 Big 12 (6th, South)

COACH

Mike Gundy — At OSU and overall:
4-7, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS

15; 8 offense, 5 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Bobby Reid, TB Mike Hamilton,
OT Corey Hilliard, WR D'Juan Woods,
DE Victor DeGrate, LB Rod Johnson,
SS Jamie Thompson

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Mike Hamilton is an all-purpose threat, rushing for 961 yards and having 879 yards in receptions. Bobby Reid should be much improved, and the offense could be ready to take off. LB Rod Johnson helps solidify the defense.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

OSU ranked 114th in turnover margin in '05 (minus-15), and most of the culprits are back. In their first year under coordinator Vance Bedford, the defense ranked 95th or worse in scoring, rushing and total defense. Depth at linebacker is a concern.

KEY LOSSES

LB Jamar Ransom, LB Pagitte McGee,
LB Paul Duren, LB Lawrence Pinson,
CB Daniel McLemore, FB Shawn Willis

OVERVIEW

The biggest key to the Cowboys returning to a bowl is quarterback Bobby Reid. He needs to stay consistent, not turn the ball over and occasionally pop big plays. With the coaching transition behind them — and a soft non-conference schedule — the Cowboys can aim at getting to a bowl.

Transition Year Over, Gundy Eager to See Progress

Oklahoma State will be better in 2006. In many ways, the Cowboys can't possibly be worse.

Their run of three consecutive bowl appearances ended with a thud last season. A coaching change, a philosophy change, a discipline change, a quarterback change — everything was different in 2005, in particular the bottom line.

The Cowboys started 3-0 but finished just 4-7, ranking near the bottom in six of Division I-A's eight major statistical categories, including scoring, scoring defense, total offense and total defense.

O-State's 1-7 record in Big 12 Conference play was the league's worst.

"We're a better football team than we were at the end of the year," second-year coach Mike Gundy said at the conclusion of spring drills.

"I don't know if we're considerably better because it depends on how guys react when we get out there for real. But I can tell standing out there watching, we're a better team. It should show up next season."

Talent is more evident. Depth is improved. Experience has been gained.

But the Cowboys' nemesis in 2005 — turnovers — continues to be the primary focus.

Quarterback Bobby Reid had 108 pass attempts last season and threw four interceptions. After he was injured, Al Pena was picked off 13 times in 179 attempts. The Cowboys lost 18 of their 31 fumbles.

OSU ranked 114th out of 117 teams with a turnover ratio of minus-1.36 per game.

There was marked improvement during

spring practice, but there were still too many turnovers. Reid threw two ill-advised picks in the Orange and White game.

"We showed signs of doing good, but the turnovers killed us," Reid said. "We've got to stop turning over the ball."

The defense didn't exactly hold up its end last season, ranking 107th nationally in rushing defense and 95th in total defense and scoring defense.

"Defensively, we gave up too many big plays," Gundy said. "We missed too many tackles. We can't do that. Our defense has to tackle better in space."

The defensive line returns intact, but there are questions in the secondary and especially at linebacker, where three four-year starters have departed.

The transition year behind them, the Cowboys are expecting to return to a winning season and a bowl.

OFFENSE

Reid is not the same quarterback. Things have slowed considerably for the 6-4, 230-pound sophomore.

After graduating high school early and enrolling at OSU in January 2004, Reid injured a shoulder that spring and red-shirted. He beat out incumbent starter Donovan Woods in spring 2005. But the offense stagnated and Woods was sent to defense in favor of the dynamic Reid.

Reid never got on track, however, and an ankle injury limited him to just seven starts.

His improvement in the spring was evident. Reid completed 56 of 82 passes



D'Juan Woods Photo by John Williamson

Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 153.9 ypg rushing (5th Big 12/48th NCAA), 170.9 ypg passing (12th/98th), 324.8 ypg total offense (10th/92nd), 20.2 ppg (12th/96th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Bobby Reid*	So.	Completed 48 percent in seven games last season.	Zac Robinson, Fr.
RB	Mike Hamilton*	So.	961 yards last season, but just one touchdown.	Calvin Roberts, Jr.
FB	Julius Crosslin*	Jr.	12 TDs last year as red-zone runner; bulldozing blocker.	John Johnson, So.
WR	D'Juan Woods*	Sr.	Third in OSU history in catches, yards.	Anthony Parks, Jr.
WR	Adarius Bowman	Jr.	Transfer from UNC; specialist at big-play catches.	Tommy Devereaux, Jr.
TE	Brandon Pettigrew*	So.	11 catches as a freshman; had a huge spring.	Paschal Smith, Jr.
LT	Corey Hilliard*	Sr.	Mr. Consistency the past three years; started at RT in '05.	Noah Franklin, Fr.
LG	Stephen Denning	So.	Inexperienced, but heady player.	Chris Simon, So.
C	David Washington*	So.	Thrust into fire last year, more prepared in 2006.	Kurt Seifried, Sr.
RG	Andrew Lawrence	Fr.	Took lead with a strong spring, but competition still on.	Jacob Secrest, Fr.
RT	David Koenig*	Jr.	Started last season at LG and was efficient.	Brady Bond, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 205.5 ypg rushing (12th Big 12/107th NCAA), 214.2 ypg passing (4th/53rd), 419.6 total defense (11th/95th), 31.3 ppg (12th/95th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Victor DeGrate*	Sr.	Considered the best pass rusher on the team.	Marque Fountain, Sr.
DT	Ryan McBean*	Sr.	Led DTs with 37 tackles, three sacks in '05.	Larry Brown, Sr.
DT	Xavier Lawson-Kennedy*	Sr.	Prep All-American still looking for greatness.	Josh Pinaire, Jr.
DE	Darnell Smith	Sr.	Made 25 tackles last year; bigger, stronger now.	Nathan Peterson, Jr.
LB	Rod Johnson	Jr.	Could emerge as defense's most exciting player.	Alex Odiari, So.
LB	Jeremy Nethon	Jr.	Converted safety should be equipped in coverage.	Marcus Brown, So.
LB	Chris Collins	Fr.	Former troubled Texas commit; powerful hitter.	Donnell Williams, Fr.
CB	Martel Van Zant	Jr.	Part-time starter last season; very athletic.	Quinton Moore, So.
CB	Calvin Mickens*	So.	Part-time starter made two INTs last season.	Jacob Lacey, So.
SS	Andre Sexton	Fr.	Routinely made big plays in spring scrimmages.	T.J. Bell, So.
FS	Donovan Woods*	Jr.	Switched from QB to DB last year; now more powerful.	Grant Jones, Sr.

*Returning starter

(68 percent) for 868 yards in five full-speed scrimmages. Last season, he completed just 48 percent.

"Last year, when I walked off the field, there were a lot of doubts in my head," Reid said.

"He's beginning to understand the concepts now," said wideout D'Juan Woods.

Reid will continue to be challenged in the fall, with redshirt freshman Zac Robinson running second, followed by 2005 injury replacement, Al Pena.

D'Juan Woods will be the quarterbacks' security blanket this season. The senior ranks third in OSU history in catches and receiving yards, and, along with sophomore tailback Mike Hamilton, stood out last season.

Hamilton led the Big 12 in rushing

going into the season finale before running into an Oklahoma brick wall. Still, he set a school freshman record with 961 rushing yards. Fullback Julius Crosslin (12 touchdowns) is also back.

Transfer wideout Adarius Bowman is eligible and showed immense big-play abilities in the spring. A handful of others will compete for the third spot, and tight end Brandon Pettigrew is a better down-field threat.

Center David Washington is back, along with tackles Corey Hilliard and David Koenig. But, with the way things went last year, few positions are without competition.

DEFENSE

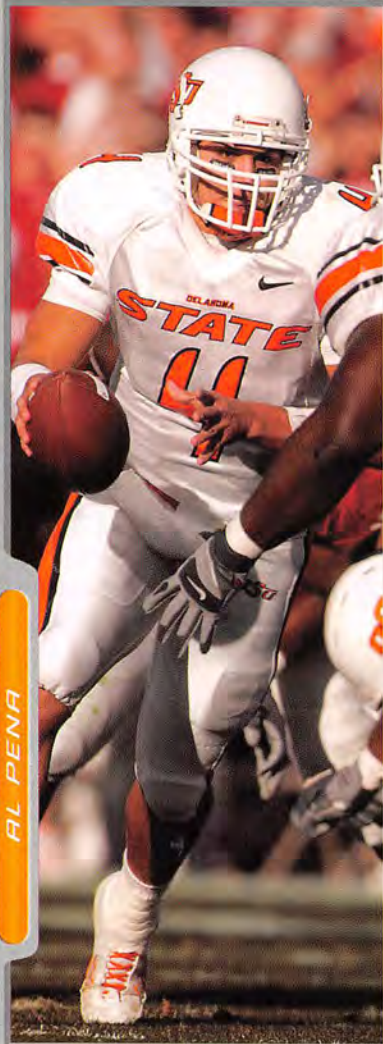
Rod Johnson's shoes are plenty big

enough. Oklahoma State's junior linebacker returns, but it's filling in the rest of the linebacker corps that could be difficult.

Jamar Ransom, Paul Duren, Lawrence Pinson and Pagitte McGee combined for 763 career tackles. This season, OSU could have a first-year freshman who has been out of football almost two years (Chris Collins) and a converted safety (Jeremy Nethon) at the other two spots.

The Cowboys were the only Big 12 team to give up more than 200 yards per game on the ground (205.5), ranking 107th nationally, so maybe the change in personnel is a good thing.

"Athletically, we're bigger, faster and stronger," defensive coordinator Vance Bedford said. "The best thing about these



AL PENNA

Photo by John Williamson



Terrance Anderson, DB

Anderson was one of the big signees out of Houston. The 6-0, 173-pounder is lighting fast with the ball in his hands, and that's why he might be a threat for OSU quickly at special teams. People also love his ability to lock down defenders. With his big-game mentality, he was a huge signing for OSU.



Derek Burton, DE

Beating Oklahoma is always a good thing. Beating Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas Tech on an in-state prospect like Burton is an even better thing. Burton, a 6-3, 250-pound run-stuffing defensive end, should see the field quickly for the Cowboys. He's great against the run and his ability to get to the ball carrier no matter where he's at will be an added plus.



Patrick Lavine, LB

Oklahoma State needed some major help on defense after the 2005 season and Lavine should be able to help the Cowboys quickly. After playing safety in high school, Lavine should spin down to his more natural linebacker in college. His ability to support the run is vital, but his ability to defend the pass made him an even bigger signing for Oklahoma State in this recruiting class.



Shane Jarka, DE

The Cowboys did a tremendous job in Houston this past season. Sugar Land Austin defensive end Shane Jarka was kind of lost in the spotlight because of the other blue-chippers they landed from H-Town. But the OSU coaches are pumped about this hard-nosed, physical and tough defensive end that's already 6-3 and 230 pounds.

Commitments	28
Average Stars	3.04
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	6
★★★☆☆	17
★★☆☆☆	5
Total Stars	85
National Rank: 22	Big 12: 4

2007 NEEDS

More depth along the offensive line would be nice, and the same goes for defensive tackle. Another blue-chip quarterback to add depth might also be vital because several of the Cowboys' other signal-callers haven't panned out.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ANDERSON, Terrance	DB	6-0, 173	★★★★★	Aldine, TX	Aldine
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 17 cornerback. ... No. 21 recruit in Texas. ... Rushed for 1,000 yards and passed for 800 as a senior.					
BOOKER, Michael	OL	6-3, 295	★★	Paris, TX	North Lamar
Played both offensive and defensive line. ... All-State.					
BROUGHTON, Scott	DB	6-1, 185	★★★	Milledgeville, GA	Ga. Military
Had 10 interceptions as a senior. ... Blocked two field goals. ... Scored two defensive touchdowns.					
BROWN, Preston	RB	5-9, 180	★★★	Antioch, TN	Antioch
Rivals.com's No. 18 all-purpose back. ... No. 11 recruit in Tennessee. ... Averaged 7.8 yards per carry.					
BURTON, Derek	DE	6-3, 250	★★★★★	Muskogee, OK	Muskogee
Rivals250 member. ... No. 17 strongside defensive tackle. ... No. 3 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Father Derek Burton was a three-year starter at Oklahoma State.					
CATE, Alex	QB	6-0, 200	★★★	Salt Lake City	Cottonwood
Rivals.com's No. 19 pro-style quarterback. ... No. 3 recruit in Utah. ... Enrolled for the spring semester.					
CHINASA, Ugo	DE	6-5, 220	★★★★★	Richardson, TX	Berkner
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 5 weakside defensive end. ... No. 28 recruit in Texas. ... Had 11 sacks as a senior.					
COLLINS, Chris	LB	6-1, 230	★★	Texarkana, TX	Texarkana
Enrolled for the spring semester. ... Had 151 tackles as a junior. ... Forced 10 fumbles in 2004.					
CONNER, DeMarcus	WR	6-1, 180	★★	Spring, TX	Westfield
Caught 16 passes for 401 yards and six touchdowns in a run-oriented offense. ... First-team All-District					
COX, Perrish	DB	6-0, 175	★★★★★	Waco, TX	University
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 8 cornerback. ... No. 15 recruit in Texas. ... Intercepted nine passes as a senior.					
FONTENOT, Deron	DB	5-9, 180	★★★	Grand Prairie, TX	S. Grand Prairie
Rivals.com's No. 49 safety. ... First-team All-District. ... Had 86 tackles as a junior.					
GENT, Justin	LB	6-2, 206	★★★	Irving, TX	MacArthur
Rivals.com's No. 39 inside linebacker. ... Had 164 tackles as a senior. ... Returned two of three interceptions for a touchdown.					
HAMILTON, Adrian	LB	6-2, 220	★★★	Dallas	Carter
Rivals.com's No. 51 inside linebacker. ... Had nine sacks and 65 solo tackles as a senior.					
JARKA, Shane	DE	6-3, 228	★★	Sugar Land, TX	Austin
Had 97 solo tackles as a senior. ... Added two sacks and one interception. ... District Defensive Player of the Year.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
LAVINE, Patrick	LB	6-2, 210	★★★★★	Houston	Jersey Village
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 17 outside linebacker. ... No. 32 recruit in Texas. ... Played both linebacker and defensive back in high school.					
LEMON, Orie	ATH	6-2, 230	★★★	Houston	Yates
Rivals.com's No. 43 athlete. ... No. 56 recruit in Texas. ... Passed for 1,214 yards and 14 touchdowns. ... Rushed for 600 yards and 12 touchdowns.					
LEWIS, Jonathan	DE	6-4, 290	★★★	Carrollton, TX	Newman Smith
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Had 10 sacks and 61 tackles as a senior. ... Two-time first-team All-District.					
McKINNEY, Myron	OL	6-4, 205	★★★	Oklahoma City	Putnam City
Rivals.com's No. 46 offensive guard. ... No. 18 recruit in Oklahoma. ... First-team All-District.					
OKUNG, Russell	OL	6-5, 250	★★★	Houston	Bush
Rivals.com's No. 33 offensive tackle. ... No. 71 recruit in Texas. ... First-team All-District.					
PARKS, Anthony	WR	6-1, 185	★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler CC
Enrolled for spring semester. ... All-State wide receiver as a senior at Olathe (Kan.) East. ... At Butler CC, had 820 receiving yards and eight touchdowns.					
PATRICK, Quincey	DT	6-2, 267	★★★	Columbus, GA	Miss. Gulf Coast CC
Rivals.com's No. 41 defensive tackle. ... No. 33 recruit in Georgia. ... Had 13 sacks and 112 tackles last season.					
PERKINS, Trent	OL	6-6, 285	★★★	Alice, TX	Alice
Rivals.com's No. 32 offensive tackle. ... No. 67 recruit in Texas. ... All-State. ... District Offensive Lineman of the Year.					
SAVAGE, Dantrell	RB	5-11, 195	★★★★★	Perkinston, MS	Miss. Gulf Coast CC
Rivals.com's No. 16 overall junior college recruit. ... Rushed for 1,249 yards last season. ... Honorable mention junior college All-American.					
SECREST, Jacob	OL	6-5, 295	★★★	Stillwater, OK	Stillwater
Rivals.com's No. 44 offensive guard. ... No. 16 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... First-team All-State.					
THOMPSON, Al'Darius	DB	5-10, 165	★★★	Mesquite, TX	North Mesquite
Rivals.com's No. 44 cornerback. ... Rushed for 1,086 yards and 19 touchdowns despite missing three games. ... First-team All-District.					
TOSTON, Keith	ATH	6-1, 195	★★★	Angleton, TX	Angleton
Rivals.com's No. 51 athlete. ... No. 76 recruit in Texas. ... Averaged more than 10 yards per carry as a senior. ... Ran for 18 touchdowns.					
WILLIAMS, Donnell	LB	6-2, 207	★★★	Houston	Madison
Rivals.com's No. 36 outside linebacker. ... No. 92 recruit in Texas. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... Had 130 tackles and three sacks as a senior.					
WOODS, Artrell	ATH	6-1, 183	★★★	Bryan, TX	Bryan
Rivals.com's No. 46 athlete. ... No. 73 recruit in Texas. ... Topped 600 rushing yards and 400 receiving yards as a junior.					

COWBOYS SPRING ROSTER

NOTEBOOK

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
55	ZACH ALLEN	DS	6-1	270	So	Edmond	81	NICK MCDONNELL	TE	6-3	265	Sr	Plano, TX
11	T.J. BELL	CB	5-11	180	So	DeSoto, TX	27	CALVIN MICKENS	CB	6-2	185	So	Beaumont, TX
24	CORTNEY BILLINGSLEY	DB	5-10	185	Sr	Arlington, TX	95	T.J. MINOR	DE	6-4	240	Fr	Houston, TX
60	BRADY BOND	OL	6-6	260	Fr	Garber	26	QUINTON MOORE	S	5-11	185	So	Pearland, TX
62	BLAKE BOTEK	OL	6-4	295	So	Grand Ledge, MI	28	JON MORRIS	WR	6-0	190	Jr	Glenpool
12	ADARIUS BOWMAN	WR	6-4	215	Jr	Chattanooga, TN	25	TODD NELSON	WR	6-0	195	So	Edmond
9	JEREMY BROADWAY	WR	5-11	180	So	Houston, TX	19	JEREMY NETHON	DB	5-9	190	Jr	Beggs
92	LARRY BROWN	DT	6-3	295	Sr	Spartanburg, SC	16	SETH NEWTON	WR	6-3	190	So	Girard, KS
35	MARCUS BROWN	LB	6-2	240	So	Hephzibah, GA	36	ALEX ODIARI	LB	6-1	225	So	Carrollton, TX
47	JEREMIAH BURTON	LB	6-2	230	So	Enid	67	JEREMY PALMOORE	OL	6-6	315	So	Memphis, TN
3	ALEX CATE	QB	6-2	198	Fr	Salt Lake City, UT	83	ANTHONY PARKS	WR	6-0	190	Jr	Olathe, KS
96	JERAY CHATHAM	DT	6-4	270	So	Houston, TX	13	NATHAN PETERSON	DE	6-2	250	Jr	Tulsa
53	SEB CLEMENTS	LB	6-1	230	So	Sanger, TX	87	BRANDON PETTIGREW	TE	6-5	255	So	Tyler, TX
25	CLINT COE	DB	6-1	190	Jr	Edmond	4	AL PEÑA	QB	6-3	225	Jr	Leander, TX
44	CHRIS COLLINS	LB	6-1	230	Fr	Texarkana, TX	74	JOSH PINAIRE	DT	6-5	280	Jr	Derby, KS
32	JULIUS CROSSLIN	RE	5-11	240	Jr	Amarillo, TX	6	RICKY PRICE	WR	6-0	175	So	Houston, TX
56	MAURICE CUMMINGS	DE	6-4	265	Jr	Rosebud, TX	10	BRUCE REDDEN	P/K	5-9	185	Sr	Woodward
51	VICTOR DEGRATE	DE	6-3	250	Sr	DeSoto, TX	14	BOBBY REID	QB	6-3	225	So	Houston, TX
65	STEVE DENNING	OL	6-4	285	So	Southaven, MS	38	COLE REYNOLDS	P/K	6-3	215	Fr	Edmond
10	TOMMY DEVEREAUX	WR	6-1	175	Jr	Duncanville, TX	85	JASON RICKS	P/K	6-1	190	So	Round Rock, TX
18	MATT FODGE	P/K	6-0	180	So	Garland, TX	1	CALVIN ROBERTS	RB	5-11	225	Jr	Port Arthur, TX
97	MARQUE FOUNTAIN	DE	6-1	260	Jr	Missouri City, TX	11	ZAC ROBINSON	QB	6-3	195	Fr	Littleton, CO
77	NOAH FRANKLIN	OL	6-4	305	Fr	Vinita	17	ZAC ROSS	WR	5-8	175	Fr	Muskogee
7	MIKE FRIESS	QB	6-2	215	Jr	Wichita, KS	57	JACOB SECREST	OL	6-5	295	Fr	Stillwater
70	PHIL FRIESS	OL	6-5	280	Jr	Conway Springs, KS	72	KURT SEIFRIED	OL	6-4	300	Sr	Jenks
29	MIKE HAMILTON	RB	6-1	215	So	Melbourne, FL	20	ANDRE SEXTON	S	6-1	190	Fr	Houston, TX
75	COREY HILLIARD	OL	6-5	310	Sr	New Orleans, LA	79	CHRIS SIMON	OL	6-5	310	So	Waller, TX
85	DAVID HUDSPETH	WR	5-11	175	Fr	Denton, TX	50	DARNELL SMITH	DT	6-0	270	Sr	San Antonio, TX
33	JOHN JOHNSON	FB	6-3	255	So	El Dorado, AR	88	PASCHAL SMITH	TE	6-4	270	Jr	Dallas, TX
2	RODRICK JOHNSON	LB	6-3	255	Jr	Galveston, TX	89	TREMAINE STANBERRY	TE	6-3	250	Jr	Lewisville, TX
30	GRANT JONES	S	5-10	195	Sr	Pawnee	68	MARSHAL TETSWORTH	OL	6-5	275	Sr	Tulsa
39	SONJI KETIKU	CB	5-8	175	Sr	Tulsa	45	DURFEY THOMPSON	LB	5-10	220	So	Edmond
61	DAVID KOENIG	OL	6-4	290	Jr	Cape Coral, FL	13	JEROMIE TUCKER	WR	5-7	170	Sr	Bixby
17	JACOB LACEY	CB	5-10	180	So	Garland, TX	7	MARTEL VAN ZANT	CB	6-2	205	Jr	Tyler, TX
52	ANDREW LAWRENCE	OL	6-4	305	Fr	Dallas, GA	82	JUSTIN WALLER	TE	6-4	250	So	Ponca City
90	XAVIER LAWSON-KENNEDY	DT	6-1	315	Sr	Duncanville, TX	63	DAVID WASHINGTON	OL	6-4	295	So	Guthrie
54	ANDREW LEWIS	OL	6-5	265	Fr	Joplin, MO	31	KEVIN WHITE	RB	6-3	210	So	DeSoto, TX
49	LANCE LIMBRICK	RB	5-10	190	Fr	Sugarland, TX	40	DONNELL WILLIAMS	LB	6-3	220	Fr	Houston, TX
15	CHIJUAN MACK	WR	6-3	180	Jr	Baton Rouge, LA	86	TEVIN WILLIAMS	WR	6-3	205	Sr	Stillwater
58	KYLE MARIACHER	DS	6-3	225	Jr	Elma, NY	84	DJUAN WOODS	WR	6-1	210	Sr	Oklahoma City
93	RYAN MCBEAN	DT	6-5	290	Sr	Bullsey, TX	8	DONOVAN WOODS	S	6-2	220	Jr	Oklahoma City

When he took over as head coach in January 2005, **Mike Gundy** immediately began cleaning house.

Within 10 months, Gundy had suspended or dismissed eight players — all of whom had worked their way onto the two-deep — because of various rules violations, run-ins with the law or other disciplinary problems. That's one-third of the team's frontline players, gone.

Clearly, Gundy's law was furious and final.

But as 2006 begins, two Cowboy starters come with checkered backgrounds. Wide receiver **Adarius Bowman** transferred from North Carolina, where he was suspended after being cited by police for marijuana possession. The charge was dropped a few weeks later, but Bowman was not reinstated.

And linebacker **Chris Collins** was once thought to be the No. 1 defensive recruit of Texas, which cooled on his recruitment after a charge of aggravated sexual assault. Even though the charge was unresolved, Gundy signed Collins.

Bowman played for **Gunter Brewer** at UNC, so when Brewer was hired by Gundy, Bowman followed him to Stillwater. Gundy said he "did a lot of research" before bringing in Collins, who signed last year but didn't enroll until January.

• OSU alum and Texas oilman **Boone Pickens** — namesake of the stadium — made news in January with a gift of \$165 million to the OSU athletic department, the largest such gift ever.

Pickens' gift will build new facilities for baseball, equestrian, soccer, tennis and track programs, and will also pay for a new \$50 million indoor football practice facility.

OSU has a five-year master plan that also includes more than \$700 million on facilities for academics and student accommodations.

• One of the highlights of the Orange and White spring game was the return of more than 275 former players, including legends **Barry Sanders**, **Hart Lee Dykes**, **Ernest Anderson** and **R.W. McQuarters**. After a morning on the golf course, during which some 200 ex-Cowboys played, they were introduced during a halftime ceremony.

"There are a lot of guys who hadn't been here in 15 or 20 years," said Gundy, who was a record-setting quarterback from 1986-89. Gundy said the "Legends Weekend" reunion will become an annual event.

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Pena	7	101.66	179	89	13	49.7	1102	8	56	157.4
Reid	7	93.67	108	52	4	48.1	602	2	49	86.0

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Hamilton	11	193	991	30	961	5.0	1	83	87.4
Crosslin	11	71	255	24	231	3.3	12	15	21.0
Reid	7	61	269	130	139	2.3	0	28	19.9

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Woods, D.J.	11	58	879	15.7	8	49	79.9
Hamilton	11	20	161	8.1	0	36	14.6
Price	11	16	238	14.9	0	42	21.6

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Ransom 99, Thompson 83, Johnson 74
Interceptions: Don Woods 2, Mickens 2, McIlmore 1
Sacks: DeGrate 5, Thompson 4.5, McBean 3
Tackles for loss: DeGrate 11, Thompson 8, Ransom 7.5

(4-7, 1-7)

Results

W	Montana State	15-10
W	at Florida Atlantic	23-3
W	Arkansas State	20-10
L	Colorado	0-34
L	Missouri	31-38
L	at Texas A&M	23-62
L	at Iowa State	10-37
L	Texas	28-47
W	Texas Tech	24-17
L	at Baylor	34-44
L	at Oklahoma	14-42



MIKE HAMILTON

linebackers is that they play downhill. ... If we can get that done, we'll be a lot better defensively this year."

The line has plenty back, but tackles Ryan McBean, Xavier Lawson-Kennedy and Larry Brown must hold the point of attack.

End Victor DeGrate had 53 tackles and was a big-play performer, with team-highs of 11 tackles for loss and five sacks. He'll get help on the edge from returnees Darnell Smith and Marque Fountain, and junior Nathan Peterson is back from

a knee injury.

The secondary is a concern. Converted quarterback Donovan Woods moves from strong to free safety. Andre Sexton had an excellent spring at strong safety.

Cornerbacks Calvin Mickens (nine starts in '05) and Martel Van Zant could start the fall at the top of the depth chart, which is still flexible.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker might be the best battle of the preseason.

In 2004, Jason Ricks made 11 of 16 field goal attempts and 47 of 49 extra point tries. When Ricks was hurt last season, Bruce Redden stepped in and hit 11 of 14 field goal attempts and 23 of 24 extra points tries.

Redden has a slightly stronger leg and last year went two of three from beyond 50 yards, with a long of 52.

Punter Matt Fodge spent the spring and the offseason trying to improve his consistency. He averaged just 39.9 yards per kick last season, and had four blocked as OSU went with an unusual "shield" formation. The Cowboys return to a conventional punt set this year.

The return game is expected to be wide open, although explosive. Grant Jones got some time there last season. Whoever takes the jobs has to replace speedy Daniel McLemore, who led the team in punt and kickoff returns in '05.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Another fast start shouldn't be

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

WR D'Juan Woods

Even with a huge senior season, he could never measure up to big brother Rashaun Woods' surreal numbers. Still, D'Juan has come into his own, catching 122 passes for 2,104 yards (both third in school history) and 15 touchdowns. ... Caught 56 passes for 879 yards and eight touchdowns last season. ... Voted second-team All-Big 12 as a sophomore and as a junior. ... Set career-highs with 10 catches, 186 yards and two touchdowns at Baylor last season. ... Caught four passes for 90 yards and two touchdowns, including a Play of the Week one-hander, against Texas.



EMERGING STAR

LB Jeremy Nethon

Recruited as an athlete, he originally came as a cornerback, then moved to safety and played 13 games his freshman season. ... Was suspended from the team before last season — one of eight disciplinary suspensions and/or dismissals — but was reinstated after the season. ... Moved to linebacker and will be undersized (5-9, 200 pounds), but was extremely productive in the spring.



TOP NEWCOMER

WR Adarius Bowman

Bowman was OSU's most consistent big-play wideout in his first spring in Stillwater. In the last three scrimmages, Bowman, a junior, caught 14 passes for 267 yards and two touchdowns, including catches of 70, 54, 42 and 48 yards. ... Bowman transferred from North Carolina, where he played in 18 games and made 28 catches for 510 yards and five touchdowns, including a 76-yard score.



Oklahoma State's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

DONOVAN WOODS



Photo by John Williamson

Overhaul of Mind, Body Paying Off

Bigger, stronger and faster, certainly.

But Donovan Woods is also much, much wiser.

Deposed as the Cowboys' quarterback two games into last season, Woods' natural athletic ability carried him through a difficult transition to strong safety. He simply did the best he could.

Now, after almost a year of playing defense, Woods has not only accepted the move, he says he has fully embraced it. During the team's spring practice, he actually thrived at it.

"I tried to handle this situation like I would any other situation," Woods said. "That's the way I was raised."

It wasn't easy. Woods started all 12 games as a sophomore quarterback and led the team to a 7-5 record and the program's third consecutive bowl berth, the 2004 Alamo Bowl.

But that was under previous coach Les Miles. When Mike Gundy was promoted from offensive coordinator, he hired Larry Fedora as coordinator and changed from an I-formation, power offense to a spread offense.

Two games into the 2005 season, OSU had averaged just 19 points in games against Montana State and Florida Atlantic. Woods had accounted for two of his team's four touchdowns, completed 53 percent of his passes and had averaged 5.6 yards per carry.

But with high school phenom Bobby Reid coming off a redshirt season and going neck-and-neck with Woods in training camp, the coaches' decision was made for Woods, a three-time, small-school state champion quarterback in high school, to give up on the position and change to defense.

Even though Woods' replacements — Reid and Al Pena — struggled with decision-making, defense-reading, turnover-committing (they combined to complete 49 percent of their passes with 10 touchdowns and 17 interceptions), Woods' days as a quarterback were done. Even though the team was just 2-7 under the new quarterbacks.

Woods made five starts on defense and finished with 32 tackles. He also led the team with two interceptions.

He has reshaped his body into that of a defensive back. He played last season at around 226 pounds, but finished spring drills weighing about 216. He is noticeably thinner in the hips and waist, but noticeably thicker in the shoulders and chest.

He's quicker from side-to-side and faster from front-to-back, and he seems to have the hang of things after moving again this season, this time to free safety.

"I'm still learning it, but I like it," he said. "I just needed time to learn it."

a problem. Oklahoma State plays host to Missouri State and Florida Atlantic, and visits Arkansas State in Little Rock, in its first three games. After that is a trip to Houston, followed by an open weekend.

But Cowboy fans remember that fattening up on a workable non-conference schedule doesn't do a whole lot once Big 12 play starts.

After opening at 3-0 in 2005, O-State closed by losing seven of its eight league contests.

The Cowboys' two most winnable games against the North Division are right out of the gate, and both are on the road: Kansas State and Kansas.

OSU likely will be underdogs in its first two league games at home — back-to-back contests against Texas A&M and Nebraska. That's followed by another road game, this time at defending national champion Texas.

After Baylor at home — the Bears stunned OSU in Waco last year — the Cowboys finish with a rugged double: at Texas Tech, Oklahoma at home.

— John E. Hoover

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 MISSOURI STATE

Sept. 9 vs. Arkansas State (Little Rock)

Sept. 16 FLORIDA ATLANTIC

Sept. 23 at Houston

Oct. 7 at Kansas State

Oct. 14 at Kansas

Oct. 21 TEXAS A&M

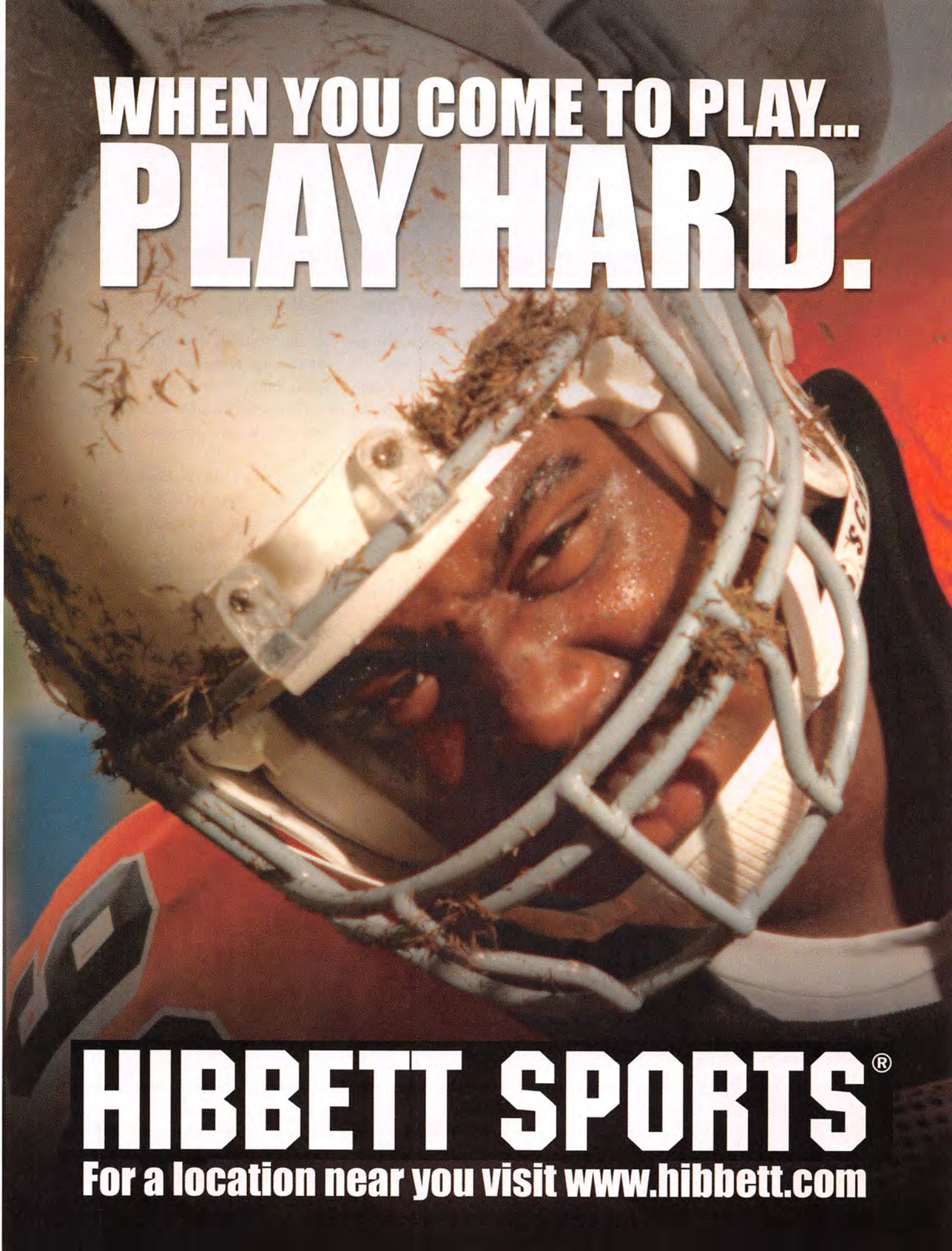
Oct. 28 NEBRASKA

Nov. 4 at Texas

Nov. 11 BAYLOR

Nov. 18 at Texas Tech

Nov. 25 OKLAHOMA



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TEXAS LONGHORNS TEXAS LONGHORNS TEXAS LONGHORNS TEXAS LONGHORNS

AT A GLANCE

2005

13-0 overall, 8-0 Big 12 (1st, South)

COACH

Mack Brown — At Texas: 83-19, 8 years; overall: 169-93-1, 22 years

RETURNING STARTERS

13; 6 offense, 7 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB Jamaal Charles, WR Limas Sweed, OL Justin Blalock, DT Frank Okam, DE Tim Crowder, LB Robert Killebrew, S Michael Griffin, CB Aaron Ross

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Even without Vince Young, the Longhorns are loaded on offense. A veteran and dominant offensive line should help ease the pressure on a new quarterback. The UT defense, meanwhile, might be better than the 2005 version.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Vince Young single-handedly won a few games for the Longhorns, and he won't be around to do that again. No quarterback on the roster has taken a snap in a collegiate game, and growing pains at the position could cost UT in close games, especially early.

KEY LOSSES

QB Vince Young, S Michael Huff, DT Rodrique Wright, TE David Thomas, LB Aaron Harris

OVERVIEW

The Longhorns' best chance at a national title repeat walked out the door with Vince Young, but this program is at such a high level thanks to excellent recruiting, that it will continue to be among the very elite. If either Colt McCoy or Jevan Snead emerges as a passable quarterback, the Horns could be back in the national title game.

Looking Like Champs ... Even Without Young

One day last winter, Selvin Young's roommate moved out.

There wasn't much fuss, really. Young, now a senior tailback for the Longhorns, helped his roommate pack, offered a hug, handshake, and best wishes, and said goodbye.

And just like that, quarterback Vince Young, perhaps the biggest man ever on the Texas campus, was gone.

"It's been quiet since he left," Selvin Young admits. "I can hear the wind blowing through the house. I can hear the walls creaking."

Texas football fans know the feeling.

When Vince Young high-tailed it to the NFL in the wake of last year's magical Rose Bowl victory, he left a sizeable void in the middle of the Longhorns' lineup and locker room.

No sooner had coach Mack Brown finished celebrating his first national championship — and the first for the Longhorns in 35 years — than he was asked the million-dollar question.

Who replaces the irrepressible Vince?

In a word, nobody.

"There's only one Vince Young," Brown said. "If you're looking for another one, you're not going to find him."

Instead, the Longhorns will look to defend their title — and the nation's longest winning streak — with a teenager behind center who has never taken a snap in a college game.

It could be Colt McCoy, a redshirt freshman who spent last year apprenticing behind Young.

It could be Jevan Snead, a highly tout-

ed true freshman who enrolled at Texas shortly after Young left, just in time for spring drills.

They were the only two scholarship quarterbacks on campus during the spring.

"I'm sure whatever happens, it will work out," Snead said. "If it takes two quarterbacks, it will work. If it takes one quarterback, it will work."

The bright side? Neither will be asked to win games alone.

Outside of Young, Texas returns most of an offense that averaged over 50 points and 500 yards per game. On defense, the Longhorns will be more than fine.

"We have something to prove this year," safety Michael Griffin said. "Vince was a great player, but he wasn't our whole team."

So it's little wonder that you-know-who's name has seldom been uttered in the Texas locker room. Even by his former roommate.

"I don't think anybody on this team is thinking about Vince," Selvin Young said. "We're just thinking about defending what people are coming to our house to get."

OFFENSE

The Longhorns lost 4,086 yards and 38 touchdowns off last year's team. And that was just from Vince Young.

Were the Longhorns more than just a one-man team in 2005?

Texas returns at least three of its top four running backs (Young, a senior, and sophomores Jamaal Charles and Henry Melton), its top three pass catchers (junior



Justin Blalock Photo by Bruce Schwartzman



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 274.9 ypg rushing (1st in Big 12/2nd in NCAA), 237.7 ypg passing (3rd/40th), 512.1 ypg total offense (1st/3rd), 50.2 ppg (1st/1st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Colt McCoy	Fr.	Can one of these guys take control of the position?	Jevan Snead, Fr.
RB	Jamaal Charles	So.	One of the best RB time-shares in the country.	Selvin Young, Sr.*
WR	Limas Sweed*	Jr.	Emerged as big-play threat who can go up and get it.	George Walker, So.
WR	Billy Pittman*	Jr.	Sat out spring with knee injury; 22.1 ypc last year.	Myron Hardy, So.
WR	Quan Cosby	So.	Former baseball star a home run threat.	Jordan Shipley, So.
TE	Neale Tweedie	Sr.	Was used primarily as a blocker last year.	Jermichael Finley, Fr.
LT	Tony Hills	Jr.	Moves into new role after being key backup in 2005.	Adam Ulatoski, Fr.
LG	Kasey Studdard*	Sr.	Was team's most improved lineman last season.	Charlie Tanner, Fr.
C	Lyle Sendlein*	Sr.	Earned first-team All-Big 12 honors last year.	Brett Valdez, Sr.
RG	Cedric Dockery	So.	Takes over for all-conference Will Allen.	Charlie Tanner, Fr.
RT	Justin Blalock*	Sr.	Lindy's No. 1-rated OT has made 38 starts in a row.	Adam Ulatoski, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 130.9 ypg rushing (7th in Big 12/33rd NCAA), 172 ypg passing (1st/8th), 302.9 ypg total defense (1st/10th), 16.4 ppg (1st/8th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Tim Crowder*	Sr.	Led team with 20 QB pressures last season.	Brian Orakpo, So.
DT	Frank Okam*	Jr.	Ready to become UT's next great tackle.	Roy Miller, So.
DT	Derek Lokey	Jr.	Has played in 22 games as a reserve.	Tully Janszen, Sr.
DE	Brian Robison*	Sr.	Team leader in sacks (seven) and TFLs (15) in '05.	Christopher Brown, So.
LB	Robert Killebrew*	Jr.	Grabbed starting spot three games into 2005.	Jeremy Campbell, So.
LB	Rashad Bobino*	So.	Moves to middle from the weak side.	Rodrick Muckelroy, Fr.
LB	Drew Kelson	Jr.	Possesses a safety's speed.	Sergio Kindle, Fr.
CB	Aaron Ross	Sr.	Blossomed into ball hawk last year (three INTs).	Brandon Foster, Jr.
CB	Tarell Brown*	Sr.	Coming off a broken arm in Rose Bowl win.	Ryan Palmer, Jr.
SS	Marcus Griffin	Jr.	Former walk-on is Michael Griffin's twin brother.	Matt Melton, Sr.
FS	Michael Griffin*	Sr.	UT's heaviest hitter and leading tackler (124) in 2005.	Erick Jackson, Jr.

*Returning starter

receivers Limas Sweed and Billy Pittman, and Taylor) and three-fifths of a bulldozing line that paved the way for last year's pinball offense.

"Vince Young was an amazing athlete," said McCoy, a redshirt freshman and leading candidate to replace Young. "But we had a lot of players on that team that were great, and a lot of them are back."

Most of them are in a crowded Texas backfield, where Young and Charles will again share carries and accolades. Junior Ramonce Taylor is off the team, pending resolution of a May charge of felony marijuana possession.

Charles, a 6-1, 190-pound track star, is the most explosive of the bunch. He averaged 7.4 yards per carry last season, rush-

ing for 878 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Five games into the season, Charles was off to the best start of any freshman in school history before a nagging ankle injury slowed him down the stretch.

Sweed again will anchor a receiving corps that should be bolstered by the emergence of oft-injured sophomore Jordan Shipley and fellow sophomore Myron Hardy.

Texas will miss David Thomas, who left with most of the school's tight end receiving records. He will be replaced by the two-man tandem of senior Neale Tweedie and athletic redshirt freshman Jermichael Finley.

The strength of the Texas offense could be in the trenches, where *Lindy's* preseason All-Americans Justin Blalock

(right tackle) and Kasey Studdard (left guard) return, as well as talented center Lyle Sendlein.

DEFENSE

Co-defensive coordinator Gene Chizik sees little difference in the defense the Longhorns will field this year and the one that was stingiest in the Big 12 last year.

"It's comparable," Chizik said. "We'll just have to get used to some different names."

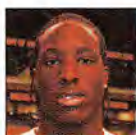
With just a couple of tweaks, and an extra year in Chizik's system, Texas coaches believe their defense should be even better than last year.

That's a bold assertion given what Texas lost — defensive tackle Rod Wright, middle linebacker Aaron Harris, safety Michael Huff and cornerback



Jevan Snead, QB

With the late departure announcement of Heisman candidate Vince Young, no position became a bigger need than quarterback. Snead, a December graduate, stepped on the practice field early for UT. The 6-3, 205-pounder should give Texas coaches the opportunity to build an offense around him in the future.



Sergio Kindle, LB

The state's top prospect for 2006 was an early pickup for the Horns and an early arrival on campus for spring ball. The 6-4, 225-pound player is still adjusting to the technique of the game, but his raw ability should earn him playing time in his first year. Kindle played running back and linebacker in high school.



Hunter Lawrence, PK

With the current roster situation being what it is, don't be surprised to see the 6-0, 180-pound kicker take a starting spot in the season opener in 2006. Lawrence set the Texas single season record for field goals made as a junior. His long was a 48-yarder in the playoffs.



Britt Mitchell, TE

Though he may have been rated in the middle of the pack for tight ends, Mitchell brings uncanny athleticism to the position and probably has one of the better upsidies of any player the Horns signed in 2006. Not only does he have raw talent, but his leadership qualities can't be coached. At 6-5, 245 pounds, Mitchell will continue his surge as one of the top players in the conference early in his career. He should also add nice competition to the Longhorns roster with the current depth at tight end.

Commitments	25
Average Stars	3.60
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	11
★★★☆☆	12
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	90
National Rank: 5	CONF: 1

2007 NEEDS

Both the offensive and defensive lines will be priorities for the Horns in 2007. A good mix of both offensive tackles and guard will be targeted in this class. The defensive backfield is also an area of need, especially at cornerback. Taking a quarterback, receiver, and running back are always a sure bet for early attention from Brown and company.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ALEXANDER, Ben	DT	5-11, 285	★★★	Anderson, SC	T.L. Hanna
Rivals.com's No. 31 defensive tackle. ... No. 12 recruit in South Carolina.					
BEASLEY, Deon	ATH	5-10, 160	★★★★	Orange, TX	West Orange Stark
Rivals.com's No. 77 overall recruit. ... No. 7 athlete. ... No. 12 recruit in Texas. ... Played wide receiver, cornerback and quarterback while returning kicks.					
BROWN, Chykie	DB	6-1, 175	★★★★	Houston	North Shore
Rivals.com's No. 53 overall recruit. ... No. 4 cornerback. ... No. 6 recruit in Texas. ... Five interceptions as senior.					
BURNETTE, Buck	OL	6-3, 290	★★★★	Wimberley, TX	Wimberly
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 6 center. ... No. 33 recruit in Texas. ... Enrolled for spring semester.					
COBB, Antwan	RB	6-0, 200	★★★	Pflugerville, TX	Pflugerville
Rivals.com's No. 33 running back. ... No. 79 recruit in Texas. ... Rushed for 1,660 yards and 24 touchdowns as a senior. ... Also had 427 receiving yards. ... Averaged 8.7 yards per carry as a senior.					
EARNEST, Dustin	LB	6-3, 220	★★★	Texarkana, TX	Texas
Rivals.com's No. 14 inside linebacker. ... No. 46 recruit in Texas. ... Scored five defensive touchdowns as a junior and senior.					
ELLIS, Brian	DE	6-5, 244	★★★	Grand Prairie, TX	South Grand Prairie
Rivals.com's No. 28 strongside defensive end. ... No. 41 recruit in Texas. ... Had 17 sacks as junior and senior.					
HARRIS, Sherrod	QB	6-2, 206	★★★	Arlington, TX	Bowie
Rivals.com's No. 8 dual-threat quarterback. ... No. 64 recruit in Texas. ... Bowie's all-time leading passer with 4,321 career yards.					
HENRY, James	DB	6-2, 195	★★★	Schertz, TX	Clemens
Rivals.com's No. 19 safety. ... No. 51 recruit in Texas. ... All-State. ... Averaged 9.8 yards per carry as a senior.					
HOUSTON, Lamar	DE	6-2, 297	★★★★	Colorado Springs, CO	Doherty
Rivals.com's No. 86 overall recruit. ... No. 6 strongside defensive end. ... No. 2 recruit in Colorado. ... Eight sacks as a senior.					
JONES, Eddie	DE	6-3, 240	★★★★	Kilgore, TX	Kilgore
Rivals.com's No. 25 overall recruit. ... No. 3 weakside defensive end. ... No. 3 recruit in Texas. ... Had 11 sacks as a senior.					
JOSEPH, Robert	DB	6-2, 180	★★★★	Port Arthur, TX	Memorial
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 16 safety. ... No. 38 recruit in Texas.					
KINDLE, Sergio	LB	6-4, 225	★★★★★	Dallas	Woodrow Wilson
Rivals.com's No. 5 overall recruit. ... No. 1 inside linebacker. ... Top recruit in Texas. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... Had 157 tackles, 36 for a loss, during his senior season.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
LAWRENCE, Hunter	K	6-0, 180	★★★	Boerne, TX	Boerne
Rivals.com's No. 2 kicker. ... Connected on 32 of 44 field goal attempts as a junior and senior. ... Career long of 49 yards.					
MARSHALL, Josh	WR	6-4, 205	★★★	Arlington, TX	Martin
Rivals.com's No. 37 wide receiver. ... No. 42 recruit in Texas. ... Had 81 catches for 1,091 yards and six touchdowns as a senior.					
McGEE, Vondrell	RB	5-10, 190	★★★★	Longview, TX	Longview
Rivals.com's No. 57 overall recruit. ... No. 3 all-purpose back. ... No. 7 recruit in Texas. ... Parade All-American. ... Rushed for 1,361 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior. ... Topped 2,000 yards and 27 touchdowns as a junior.					
MITCHELL, Britt	TE	6-5, 245	★★★	Kilgore, TX	Kilgore
Rivals.com's No. 18 tight end. ... No. 62 recruit in Texas. ... Blocking tight end. ... All-State honorable mention.					
MOORE, Steve	OL	6-4, 275	★★★	Houston	Jersey Village
Rivals.com's No. 32 offensive guard. ... No. 74 recruit in Texas in Texas. ... All-State tackle. ... Had 30 pancakes and 15 knockdowns as a senior.					
NORTON, Jared	LB	6-3, 232	★★★★	Rowlett, TX	Rowlett
Rivals.com's No. 89 overall recruit. ... No. 5 inside linebacker. ... No. 14 recruit in Texas. ... Started career as a cornerback.					
PAYNE, Phillip	WR	6-2, 201	★★★★	Garland, TX	South Garland
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 20 wide receiver. ... No. 19 recruit in Texas. ... Had 601 receiving yards as a senior. ... Rushed for 591 yards as a junior and senior.					
SMITH, Greg	TE	6-5, 230	★★★	Montgomery, TX	Montgomery
Rivals.com's No. 25 tight end. ... No. 96 recruit in Texas. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... Missed senior season due to injury.					
SNEAD, Jevan	QB	6-3, 205	★★★★	Stephenville, TX	Stephenville
Rivals.com's No. 61 overall recruit. ... No. 3 dual-threat quarterback. ... No. 8 recruit in Texas. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... Caught four touchdown passes as a junior.					
WATTS, Roy	OL	6-6, 200	★★★	Houston	Worthing
Rivals.com's No. 45 offensive tackle. ... Second-team All-State. ... Also played long snapper. ... Averaged a double-double in basketball.					
WEBB, J'Marcus	OL	6-8, 285	★★★★	Mesquite, TX	North Mesquite
Rivals.com's No. 63 overall recruit. ... No. 3 offensive tackle. ... No. 9 recruit in Texas. ... Parade All-American.					
WEBBER, Montre	WR	6-3, 191	★★★★		Heame, TX
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 18 wide receiver. ... No. 20 recruit in Texas. ... Had 64 catches for 1,292 yards and 17 TDs as a senior.					

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
00	BEN ALEXANDER	DT	6-0	298	Fr	Anderson, SC	96	DEREK LOKEY	DT	6-2	275	Jr	Denton
12	SAM AREIAS	RB	5-7	201	Sr	Los Banos, CA		JOSH MARSHALL	WR	6-4	205	Fr	Arlington
82	COY AUNE	WR	6-2	195	Jr	Austin	94	THOMAS MARSHALL	DT	6-6	293	Jr	Dallas
39	RYAN BAILEY	P/PK	6-2	180	So	Austin	12	COLT MCCOY	QB	6-3	195	Fr	Tuscola
00	DEON BEASLEY	WR/DB	5-10	168	Fr	Orange	25	MARK MCCOY	WR	6-2	188	Sr	Dallas
63	JUSTIN BLALOCK	OT	6-4	329	Sr	Plano	13	MATTHEW MCCOY	QB	6-3	195	Sr	Dallas
44	RASHAD BOBINO	LB	5-11	230	So	West Texas City		VONDRELL MCGEE	RB	5-10	180	Fr	Longview
35	TODD BONDY	LB	6-0	210	Jr	Southlake	88	MAC MCWHORTER	TE	6-4	226	Fr	Austin
48	CHRISTOPHER BROWN	DE	6-3	210	So	Texarkana	37	HENRY MELTON	RB	6-3	270	So	Grapevine
00	CHYKIE BROWN	DB	6-1	180	Fr	Houston	18	MATT MELTON	S	6-0	210	Sr	Flint
5	TARELL BROWN	CB	6-0	200	Sr	Mesquite	52	CORY MICHNER	DE	6-0	210	So	St. Louis, MO
18	WILL BUCHANAN	QB	6-1	180	So	Austin	99	ROY MILLER	DT	6-2	300	So	Killeen
65	BUCK BURNETTE	OL	6-3	295	Fr	Wimberley		BRITT MITCHELL	TE	6-5	250	Fr	Kilgore
43	JEREMY CAMPBELL	LB	6-2	220	So	Richardson	24	RYAN MOENCH	DB	6-0	185	So	Austin
19	BENJAMIN CAMPOS	PK	5-10	192	Sr	New Braunfels	43	JUSTIN MOORE	P/PK	6-2	185	So	Houston
23	JAIME CARVAJAL	RB	5-4	147	Jr	Taft		STEVE MOORE	OL	6-5	275	Fr	Houston
25	JAMAAL CHARLES	RB	6-1	190	So	Port Arthur	38	RODRICK MUCKELROY	LB	6-2	230	Fr	Hallsville
00	ANTWAN COBB	RB/LB	6-0	205	Fr	Pflugerville	32	MARCUS MYERS	RB	6-3	250	Sr	Austin
6	QUAN COSBY	WR	5-11	200	So	Mart		JARED NORTON	LB	6-3	236	Fr	Rowlett
80	TIM CROWDER	DE	6-4	270	Sr	Tyler	10	ISHIE ODUGWU	S	5-10	195	Fr	Denton
33	SCOTT DERRY	LB	6-3	230	Jr	Pearland	3	CHRIS OGBONNAYA	RB	6-1	220	So	Missouri City
55	CEDRIC DOCKERY	OG	6-4	315	So	Garland	97	FRANK OKAM	DT	6-5	315	Jr	Dallas
70	GREG DOLAN	OT	6-7	290	So	Austin	98	BRIAN ORAKPO	DE	6-4	238	So	Houston
00	DUSTIN EARNEST	LB	6-3	217	Fr	Texarkana	80	DANIEL ORR	WR	6-0	180	So	Corsicana
00	BRIAN ELLIS	DE	6-5	250	Fr	Grand Prairie	29	RYAN PALMER	DB	5-10	185	So	Arlington
16	JERMICHAEL FINLEY	TE	6-5	220	Fr	Diboll		PHILIP PAYNE	WR	6-2	205	Fr	Garland
21	MICHAEL FLATH	S	5-9	180	Jr	Arcadia, CA	46	JULIAN PETERMAN	LB	6-0	200	So	Schertz
21	ERIC FOREMAN	LB	6-4	230	Jr	Corrigan	85	CHRISTOPH PETERS	WR	6-3	220	Sr	Aachen, Germany
28	BRANDON FOSTER	CB	5-9	180	Jr	Arlington	5	BILLY PITTMAN	WR	6-0	198	Jr	Cameron
22	ADAIR FRAGOSO	QB	5-11	215	Sr	El Paso	86	KIRBY PORTLEY	TE	6-2	232	Sr	Kilgore
1	TYRELL GATEWOOD	LB	6-2	210	Jr	Tyler	45	NIC REDWINE	DE	6-3	225	So	Tyler
17	TREVOR GERLAND	P/PK	6-2	190	Fr	Katy	39	BRIAN ROBISON	DE	6-3	275	Sr	Splendora
67	DALLAS GRIFFIN	C	6-4	275	Jr	Katy	31	AARON ROSS	CB	6-1	192	Sr	Tyler
26	MARCUS GRIFFIN	S	6-0	195	Jr	Austin	62	LYLE SENDLEIN	C	6-5	305	Sr	Scottsdale, AZ
27	MICHAEL GRIFFIN	S	6-0	205	Sr	Austin	8	JORDAN SHIPLEY	WR	6-0	184	So	Burnet
71	CHRIS HALL	OL	6-4	280	Fr	Irving	13	GREG SMITH	TE	6-4	238	Fr	Montgomery
23	MYRON HARDY	WR	6-2	210	So	Austin	7	JEVAN SNEAD	QB	6-3	215	Fr	Stephenville
00	SHERROD HARRIS	QB	6-3	212	Fr	Arlington	61	JAICUS SOLIS	DT	6-4	250	Sr	San Angelo
58	WILLIAM HARVEY	DS	5-11	212	So	Houston	40	ALEX SPEARS	FB	5-6	200	So	Houston
00	JAMES HENRY	DB	6-2	205	Fr	Schertz	64	KASEY STUDDARD	OG	6-3	305	Sr	Lone Tree, CO
79	TONY HILLS	OT	6-6	295	Jr	Houston	4	LIMAS SWEED	WR	6-5	219	Jr	Brenham
28	ANTWAUN HOBBS	RB	5-7	180	Sr	Garland	52	CHARLIE TANNER	OG/C	6-4	280	Fr	Austin
83	STEVEN HOGAN	TE	6-5	255	Jr	Sugar Land	54	MICHAEL TAYLOR	C	5-11	219	So	LaMarque
00	LAMARR HOUSTON	DE	6-2	257	Fr	Colorado Springs, CO	27	CLAYTON TEFTELLER	WR	6-0	175	Sr	Gilmer
6	ERICK JACKSON	S/CB	6-2	185	Jr	Cedar Hill	49	LUKE TIEMANN	DE	6-2	219	Jr	Pflugerville
91	TULLY JANSZEN	DT	6-3	280	Sr	Keller	14	FREDDY TORRES	QB	6-1	190	So	Pecos
00	GREG JOHNSON	P/PK	6-1	195	Fr	Lilburn, GA	87	NEALE TWEEDIE	TE	6-5	265	Sr	Lucas
00	EDDIE JONES	DE	6-3	240	Fr	Kilgore	74	ADAM ULATOSKI	OT	6-8	290	Fr	Southlake
9	NATE JONES	WR	6-2	195	Jr	Texarkana	86	PETER ULLMAN	TE	6-4	252	So	Austin
00	ROBERT JOSEPH	DB	6-2	195	Fr	Port Arthur	56	BRETT VALDEZ	OG/C	6-4	305	Sr	Brownwood
4	DREW KELSON	LB	6-2	215	Fr	Houston	84	GEORGE WALKER	WR	6-3	205	So	Houston
89	DANIEL KENDALL	WR	6-2	185	Sr	Houston		ROY WATTS, JR.	OL	6-6	295	Fr	Houston
40	ROBERT KILLEBREW	LB	6-2	230	Jr	Spring		JMARCUS WEBB	OL	6-8	280	Fr	Mesquite
2	SERGIO KINDLE	LB	6-4	225	Fr	Dallas		MONTRE WEBBER	WR	6-3	190	Fr	Hearne
59	CHAD KUGLER	LB	6-2	220	So	Richardson		CHRIS WIELAND	DB	5-9	170	So	Cedar Park
26	STEPHEN LANE	RB	6-0	185	So	Tyler	22	SELVIN YOUNG	RB	6-0	215	Sr	Houston
	HUNTER LAWRENCE	PK	6-0	180	Fr	Boerne	16	GILBERT ZEPEDA	QB	6-0	186	Jr	Pharr
95	AARON LEWIS	DE	6-4	275	So	Albuquerque, NM							

Sophomore receiver **Jordan Shipley's** return to the Texas lineup last season was, well, hamstringing.

The shifty, sticky-fingered pass-catcher strained his right hamstring during summer workouts. Rushing to get back, Shipley ended up straining the hamstring three more times before shutting himself down without playing in a single game.

It marked the second consecutive missed season for Shipley, who was forced to sit out all of 2004 with torn knee ligaments.

He returned to the field for spring workouts and — knock on wood — is expected to make his Texas debut this season.

"This time, I was going to sit out until it really started to feel better," he said.

If healthy, Shipley should provide some automatic offense for the Longhorns. He holds many of the state's high school receiving records.

• The Longhorns hope their set of twins — **Michael and Marcus Griffin** — can provide some blockbuster power in the secondary.

Michael Griffin is a returning starter at free safety. Marcus Griffin, a former walk-on, is a leading candidate to replace the departed Michael Huff at strong safety.

Already, teammates are beginning to debate which Griffin hits harder.

"It's very cool to be playing on this level with my twin," Michael Griffin said.

• Texas' quarterback situation is a question mark heading into the season, but it could have been worse. **Jevan Snead** could have left the state and gone to Florida.

Snead was originally committed to **Urban Meyer** and the Gators, but switched his pledge to Texas in November.

Snead said the switch had more to do with re-thinking family commitments, and less to do with the Gators' pursuit of **Tim Tebow**, another hot-shot quarterback recruit.

"My family has never missed a game," Snead said. "I wanted to play at a place where they could come see me play."

• The rivalry game against **Oklahoma** will remain at the **Cotton Bowl** during the State Fair of Texas through 2010. The schools agreed in early May to add two years to the previous contract.

(13-0, 8-0)

W	Louisiana-Lafayette	60-3
W	at Ohio State	25-22
W	Rice	51-10
W	Missouri	51-20
W	vs. Oklahoma (Dallas)	45-12
W	Colorado	42-17
W	Texas Tech	52-17
W	at Oklahoma State	47-28
W	at Baylor	62-0
W	Kansas	66-14
W	at Texas A&M	40-29
Big 12 Championship		
W	Colorado	70-3
Rose Bowl		
W	USC	41-38

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
V. Young	13	163.95	325	212	10	65.2	3036	26	75	233.5
Nordgren	13	72.25	11	6	1	54.5	47	0	22	3.62

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
V. Young	13	155	1186	136	1050	6.8	12	80	80.8
Charles	13	119	906	28	878	7.4	11	80	67.5
Taylor	13	76	561	48	513	6.8	12	57	39.5

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Thomas	13	50	613	12.3	5	32	47.2
Sweed	13	36	545	15.1	5	45	41.9
Pittman	13	34	750	22.1	5	75	57.7

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: M.Griffin 124, Huff 109, Harris 91
Interceptions: M.Griffin 3, Ross 3, five with 1
Sacks: Robison 7, Wright 4.5, Harris 4, Killebrew 4
Tackles for loss: Robison 15, Wright 14, Harris 12



JAMMAL CHARLES

Cedric Griffin combined for 164 career starts — but one not without merit.

The secondary is the biggest question.

Tarell Brown and Aaron Ross, seniors whom coaches considered to be co-starters at cornerback last season, will each get full-time duties this season.

Michael Griffin, the team's leading tackler and an All-American candidate, will be back to roam his free safety slot. Griffin's twin brother, Marcus, a former walk-on, has the inside track to replace

Huff at strong safety.

The Longhorns should be especially stout up front, where senior ends Brian Robison and Tim Crowder anchor a play-making line. Junior tackle Frank Okam, a 6-5, 315-pound behemoth, is a star in the making. Sophomore Roy Miller and junior Derek Lokey should team with Okam to form a beefy three-man rotation at tackle.

At linebacker, sophomore Rashad Bobino moves from the weak side to Harris' vacant spot in the middle. Drew Kelson, a highly regarded junior, will take over the weakside duties full time this year. Robert Killebrew, a junior head-hunter with a man-sized mean streak, returns to his starting spot on the strong side.

Sergio Kindle, a true freshman from Dallas who was the most highly touted member of the Longhorns' most recent recruiting class, should play his way into the mix at outside linebacker as well.

SPECIAL TEAMS

For most of his Texas tenure, Brown has been wary of handing scholarships to place-kickers straight out of high school.

That didn't stop him from handing one in February to Hunter Lawrence, a two-time all-state selection while kicking for Boerne High School outside of San Antonio. Lawrence will be given every opportunity to fill the vacancy created by the departure of David Pino.

Greg Johnson, a senior who handled all the kicking chores for much of the spring, likely will handle punting duties this season. Trevor Gerland, a redshirt

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

OT Justin Blalock

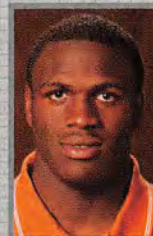
UT's big right tackle turned down NFL riches to return to Texas for his senior season. Blalock should be the focal point of an offensive line that appears to be the nation's best. ... Blalock, 6-4 and 329 pounds, helped anchor a line that paved the way for the Longhorns to lead the nation in scoring (50.2 points per game), rank second in rushing (274.9 yards per game) and third in total offense (512.1 yards per game). ... A consensus All-Big 12 pick in 2005, Blalock should contend for All-American honors and a spot in the first-round of the NFL Draft.



EMERGING STAR

RB Jamaal Charles

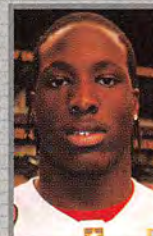
Five games into his freshman season, Charles was off to the best start of any rookie running back in Texas history. Leg injuries hampered him for the latter half of the season, but Charles still finished fifth on the UT freshman charts in rushing (878 yards) and touchdowns (11). ... His 7.4 yards per carry ranked third in the nation. ... Charles, a 6-1, 190-pound speedster, flashed his potential with a 189-yard, three-touchdown game against Rice. He will continue to split time with Selvin Young in the backfield.



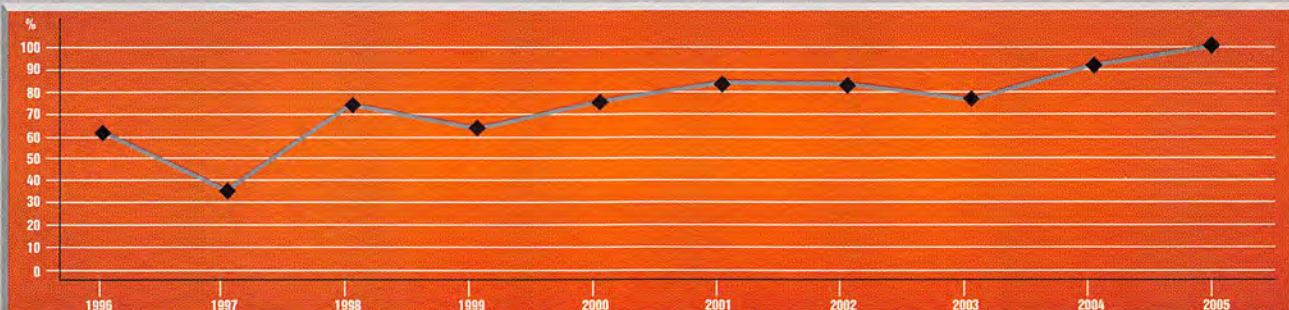
TOP NEWCOMER

LB Sergio Kindle

Kindle, the crown jewel of Mack Brown's 2006 recruiting class, could make an immediate impact. ... Kindle, who starred on both sides of the ball for Woodrow Wilson High School, has been billed as the top defensive recruit to come out of Dallas since Jesse Armstead. ... Kindle recorded 411 tackles — 55 for a loss — and rushed for 5,632 yards and 86 touchdowns in his final three prep seasons. There has been talk of Kindle getting a look at running back, but his ticket to stardom remains on defense.



Texas' Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

MICHAEL GRIFFIN



Photo by Scott Boehm

A Safety With Plenty of Bite

Go ahead and tell Michael Griffin that the safety position at the University of Texas has gone to the dogs.

He'll probably take it as a compliment.

Griffin, the Longhorns' starting free safety, breeds pit bulls in his spare time.

"There's definitely an identity and a toughness those dogs have," Griffin said.

As the ball carriers and quarterbacks of the Big 12 will tell you, Griffin has

come to foster the same identity and toughness on the football field.

The 6-0, 205-pound senior, regarded as the team's heaviest hitter, led the Longhorns with 124 tackles last season and tied for the lead with three interceptions. That includes a tightrope-walking theft of Southern California's Matt Leinart in the end zone in the Rose Bowl.

A renowned special teams stalwart, Griffin has also blocked a school-record six punts in his career.

Griffin will be counted upon to anchor a Texas secondary that lost a pair of starters, including Thorpe Award-winning strong safety Michael Huff.

"He's a great athlete who will just knock you out," Texas coach Mack Brown said. "He's learned to be more disciplined with his eyes. He's learned the position."

Even if football is only his second love.

Griffin grew up wanting to be a veterinarian — so much so that he briefly considered attending school at intrastate rival Texas A&M, which is renowned for its vet school.

Even as a Longhorn, Griffin doesn't watch much ESPN. His favorite channel is Animal Planet.

From January until the end of spring, he hadn't watched a single down of the Longhorns' epic victory over the Trojans in the Rose Bowl.

"But I've been to two dog shows," he said.

For most of his time at Texas, Griffin has kept two pit bulls — named Shaq and Honey — at his rental home in southwest Austin. Recently, he added a third dog to the family.

"Her official name is Rose Bowl 2006," Griffin said. "I call her 'Little Rose.'"

Griffin's dog fetish has become the subject of jokes around the Texas locker room.

Kidded cornerback Tarrel Brown: "He doesn't care a thing about football."

Which, of course, isn't entirely true.

Just watch Griffin on the field, shedding blockers, zeroing in on a ball carrier and going to work. You could say he's like a dog going after a bone.

freshman, is also in the mix.

Texas' return game was one of the nation's best last season, and should be again. Aaron Ross averaged nearly 15 yards per punt return — two for scores.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Texas' fresh-faced quarterbacks won't have long to get their bearings because Ohio State marches into town in the second week of the season for the most hotly anticipated early-season matchup in the country.

Last year, the Longhorns used a come-from-behind victory in Columbus, Ohio, as a September springboard for their national championship run.

If there's one advantage to the Longhorns' schedule, it's that they don't have to leave the state of Texas until mid-October.

Texas' first out-of-state trek, however, is a doozie. The Longhorns head to Nebraska to face the Cornhuskers in an daunting environment. Ditto the next week, when the Longhorns face Texas Tech in Lubbock.

Those back-to-back trips could make or break the Longhorns' late-season surge toward the Big 12 and national titles.

— Jeffrey McDonald

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 9	OHIO STATE
Sept. 16	at Rice
Sept. 23	IOWA STATE
Sept. 30	SAM HOUSTON STATE
Oct. 7	vs. Oklahoma (Dallas)
Oct. 14	BAYLOR
Oct. 21	at Nebraska
Oct. 28	at Texas Tech
Nov. 4	OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 11	at Kansas State
Nov. 24	TEXAS A&M

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OHIO STATE @ TEXAS
TEXAS VS OU
TEXAS TECH @ A&M
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AT A GLANCE

2005

5-6 overall, 3-5 Big 12 (4th, South)

COACH

Dennis Franchione — At Texas A&M:
16-19, 3 years; overall: 171-91-2, 23 years

RETURNING STARTERS

13; 7 offense, 5 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Stephen McGee, WR Chad Schroeder,
TE Martellus Bennett, LB Justin Warren,
DB Japhus Brown, DL Red Bryant,
S Melvin Bullitt

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Stephen McGee's toughness and touch will help make the A&M offense one of the most explosive units in the Big 12 and beyond. The offensive line is tough, and the receiving corps — including Martellus Bennett at tight end — can stretch and stun a defense.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The defense featured more holes than a practice putting green last season. A&M will be better on defense in 2006, but how much? The special teams, as a whole, have also been disappointing for several years and must carry a bigger load.

KEY LOSSES

QB Reggie McNeal, WR Jason Carter,
LB Lee Foliaki, FS Jaxson Appel,
PK Todd Pegram

OVERVIEW

With an explosive offense and a favorable non-conference schedule, the Aggies should be bowling again. If Gary Darnell's defense cuts down on the big plays allowed, the Aggies could be the surprise team of the Big 12 South. However, they might be a year or two away from seriously pushing for South supremacy.

Going Old School In Quest for New Results

After watching his injury-riddled defense sink to cavernous depths last fall, Texas A&M coach Dennis Franchione contemplated what he needed to do to invigorate his entire team — especially his defense.

Franchione's revitalizing strategy: go old school.

Among the four new assistants on Franchione's staff are 57-year-old defensive coordinator Gary Darnell (35 years of coaching experience) and 64-year-old safeties coach Bill Clay (39 years of coaching experience).

Those hires didn't necessarily galvanize A&M fans when they were first announced, but by the end of spring practice it was obvious Franchione's moves had achieved the approval of those whose opinions matter the most: the players.

Said defensive lineman Chris Harrington: "It's a totally different feeling. The enthusiasm level during practice is through the roof. That's what Coach Darnell emphasizes on defense. That's what greases the wheels."

Safety Melvin Bullitt echoed similar perspectives regarding Clay's effect on a secondary that finished last nationally in passing defense: "Coach Clay is one of a kind. It's like old school military. He doesn't even know how to use a computer.

"He's really old school, but that's what we need. We need someone to get us back to our roots — hard hitting, covering, getting real physical. It's time to win; it's time for us to be on top and to take the Big 12. We want (opponents) to say, 'Dang, I've got to go to Kyle Field.'"

It will take more than a mere attitude adjustment to turn things around at Texas A&M, which has made just one bowl appearance in the past four seasons. But good team chemistry appears to be an ideal starting point.

A&M hasn't only gone old school in its hiring practices. The '06 Aggies also appear to possess an old-fashioned, blue collar work ethic, along with a throw-back mindset that matches the rugged determination and fearless style of the team's new field leader — quarterback Stephen McGee.

"We're resolved to do whatever it takes to win," said the fiery McGee. "And we will win."

McGee's tenacity — along with the energy and schemes provided by the new assistant coaches — definitely gives this team a different look and feel than others in A&M's recent past.

Now, if the school that once built its legacy on a dominating defense can return to its old Wrecking Crew ways, the old-school Aggies could quickly return to their traditional status of yesteryear: contenders.

OFFENSE

Reggie McNeal departed after practically re-writing the A&M record book for quarterbacks. But it wasn't until McNeal went down in the third quarter of the 10th game of last season that A&M truly seemed to click into another gear.

And the reason was clear: Stephen McGee provides instant energy.

In six spirited quarters against



Courtney Lewis Photo by Doug Holleman



Oklahoma and Texas, McGee won over his teammates and the A&M fans with his hard-nosed style and his natural leadership skills. He rushed for 175 yards in those six quarters, taking shots and delivering them with reckless abandon.

"Stephen brings a real spirit to the field," Franchione said.

"Obviously, the guy a lot of people already compare him to is Bucky (Richardson). If you look at Aggie quarterbacks over the years, the ones that the fans really identify with are the hard-nosed, find-a-way-to-win type of guys.

"You can definitely see that in Stephen, and that's how his teammates already feel about him. They respect him, and they believe in him."

Franchione also believes McGee will

Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 234.3 ypg rushing (2nd in Big 12/10th in NCAA), 207.4 ypg passing (8th/78th), 442.3 ypg total offense (3rd/17th), 32.0 ppg (3rd/32nd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Stephen McGee	So.	A hard-nosed and commanding leader.	Ty Branyon, Sr.
TB	Courtney Lewis*	Sr.	Averaged 6.6 yards per carry last season.	Jorvorskie Lane, So.
FB	Chris Alexander	Jr.	Solid blocker who can take on linebackers.	Greg Boothe, Sr.
WR	L'Tydrick Riley	Sr.	Big, dependable target missed '05 due to knee injury.	Earvin Taylor, Jr.
WR	Chad Schroeder*	Sr.	Mr. Touchdown (five in 20 catches) is a home run hitter.	Howard Morrow, So.
TE	Martellus Bennett*	So.	Touted prospect is one of the best athletes in Big 12.	Joey Thomas, Jr.
QT	Yemi Babalola*	So.	Possesses a mean streak; started every game in '05.	Alex Kotzur, Sr.
QG	Kirk Elder*	Jr.	Has started 22 games in the past two years.	Michael Shumard, Fr.
C	Cody Wallace*	Jr.	One of Big 12's most underrated offensive linemen.	Kevin Matthews, Fr.
SG	Grant Dickey	Sr.	Transfer first signed with Coach Fran at Alabama.	Chris Yoder, Jr.
ST	Corey Clark*	Jr.	Strong blocker started all 11 games in 2005.	Travis Schneider, So.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 139.2 ypg rushing (8th in Big 12/44th in NCAA), 304.6 ypg passing (12th/117th), 443.8 ypg total defense (12th/107th), 31.2 ppg (11th/94th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Chris Harrington*	Jr.	Team's most consistent defensive lineman last fall.	Jason Jack, Jr.*
DT	Red Bryant*	Jr.	Played extremely well in 2005 stretch run.	Marques Thornton, Sr.
DT	Bryce Reed	Sr.	Compact defensive lineman is solid run stopper.	Henry Smith, Jr.
DE	Michael Bennett	So.	Big-time upside for athletic youngster.	Cyril Obiozor, So.
LB	Justin Warren*	Sr.	Best overall playmaker on A&M defense.	Matt Featherston, Fr.
LB	Mark Dodge	Jr.	Junior college transfer has old-school mentality.	Stephen Hodge, Jr.
ROV	Arkeith Brown	So.	Hard-hitting athlete who can cover.	Chevar Bryson, Fr.
CB	Danny Gorrer	So.	Baptized under fire last year as freshman.	Jordan Peterson, Fr.
CB	Marquis Carpenter	Jr.	Made steady progress after rough '05 start.	Marcus Gold, Fr.
FS	Japhus Brown	Jr.	Season-ending injury after four games hurt secondary.	Devin Gregg, So.
SS	Melvin Bullitt*	Sr.	Well-spoken senior is ready to shine.	Alton Dixon, So.

*Returning starter

prove to be an extremely accurate passer. Due to an abundance of injuries at receiver last year, McGee relied heavily on the option game. But as he proved in high school — he passed for 8,256 yards in his prep career — and throughout the spring, McGee possesses an exceptional and accurate arm.

With four returning starters on the offensive line (Yemi Babalola, Corey Clark, Kirk Elder and Cody Wallace) and an abundance of talented receivers, McGee should have the time and the targets to make things happen through the air.

Wide receivers L'Tydrick Riley, Earvin Taylor and Chad Schroeder all return after enduring season-ending injuries last fall, giving A&M an explosive receiving corps. Tight end Martellus Bennett is a special talent, as well.

The backfield also returns plenty of firepower, as Courtney Lewis and the powerful, 280-pound Jorvorskie Lane return. True freshman Mike Goodson, who might have been the top high school running back prospect in Texas, should also figure into the tailback mix.

DEFENSE

While the offense is loaded with playmakers, the defense enters 2006 loaded with questions. The primary one: Can A&M stop anyone?

The Aggies gave up an average of 43.5 points per game during their season-ending four-game losing streak. And A&M ranked 113th nationally in third-down percentage defense, allowing opponents to convert at a startling rate of 47.9 percent.



Michael Goodson, RB

The running back position was a big need in 2006 which is evident with the four signees. However, Goodson, a 6-0, 205-pound speedster followed the saying "best for last." Goodson, a Rivals100 member, chose the Aggies over Miami and Southern Cal in late January.



Anthony Lewis, LB

Adding instant-impact depth to the linebacker spot was definitely highlighted by Lewis. The Rivals100 member is fast off the outside and hits with reckless abandon. Rated as the No. 8 outside linebacker in the country, Lewis should come in and make for good competition.



Jordan Pugh, DB

One of the best cover corners in the state should come in looking for a starting spot in the defensive backfield. Pugh, a four-star rated player, picked the Aggies over scholarship offers from Alabama, Louisville, Nebraska, Purdue, Texas Tech, and Iowa State. The NIKE Training Camp was the turning point for Pugh posting solid numbers during that event.

THE SLEEPER



Terrence McCoy, WR

Coming from a Texas high school that consistently puts out Division I stars, McCoy was very much under the radar as a junior prospect. But at 6-3, 198 pounds, it didn't take people long to notice. During his high school career, he split time at defensive back and receiver where he showed versatility. His brother, Jamie McCoy, signed with the Aggies a year earlier, paving the way for the younger sibling. Sharing time with track and basketball in high school gave him well-rounded athleticism and has A&M fans excited for his future.

Commitments	21
Average Stars	3.10
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	4
★★★☆☆	15
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	65
National Rank: 27	CONF: 6

2007 NEEDS

Taking up to five offensive linemen will be a priority along with as many as two quarterbacks in the signing class. The defensive line and linebacker will also be top positions of focus for A&M in 2007. The youth at Texas A&M along the D-line and a late loss of linebacker targets in 2006 will force the Aggies to focus on those spots.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
BASTON, Jonathan	DB	6-2, 190	★★	Cisco, TX	Cisco JC
NJCAA Defensive Player of the Year. ... Had eight interceptions and returned two for touchdowns. ... Averaged 30.8 yards per interception return.					
BEYER, Cody	WR	6-1, 175	★★	Smithson Valley, TX	Smithson Valley
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Two-time All-District. ... Caught 15 passes for 786 yards and four touchdowns as a senior. ... Had 975 receiving yards and 10 TDs as a junior.					
BROWN, Kenny	WR	6-3, 197	★★★	Oklahoma City	Putnam City No.
Rivals.com's No. 13 recruit in Oklahoma. ... Caught 63 passes for 861 yards and 10 touchdowns. ... Also had four interceptions on defense. ... Set school record with 13 catches in a game as a senior.					
CAFLISCH, Christian	ATH	6-2, 178	★★★	San Antonio, TX	Madison
Threw for 1,507 yards and 15 touchdowns and rushed for 1,374 yards and nine touchdowns as a senior. ... Also returned two kickoffs for a TD.					
COOPER, Latreal	RB	6-2, 200	★★★	Cuero, TX	Cuero
Rivals.com's No. 31 running back. ... No. 77 recruit in Texas. ... Missed junior season due to a neck injury. ... Rushed for 1,498 yards and 24 touchdowns as a senior.					
DeGRATE, Torey	WR	6-0, 180	★★★	Athens, TX	Trinity Valley
Rivals.com's No. 57 overall junior college recruit. ... Signed with Texas A&M two years ago out of Waco (Texas). ... Led conference in receiving with 684 yards.					
DODGE, Mark	LB	6-3, 225	★★★	Quincy, CA	Feather River
Rivals.com's No. 63 overall junior recruit. ... Had 144 tackles last season. ... Enrolled for spring semester. ... Served four years in the U.S. Army.					
FLEURINOR, Pierre	LB	6-0, 180	★★★	Wharton, TX	Wharton
Rivals.com's No. 39 outside linebacker. ... No. 95 recruit in Texas. ... Three-time All-District. ... Had two interceptions and two sacks as a senior.					
GOODSON, Michael	RB	6-0, 205	★★★★	Klein, TX	Collins
Rivals.com's No. 32 overall recruit. ... No. 4 running back. ... No. 4 recruit in Texas. ... Averaged 9.8 yards per carry as a senior. ... Rushed for 973 yards in 2005. ... Mother was an Olympic sprinter. ... Father played basketball at Pittsburgh.					
JOHNSON, Jerrod	ATH	6-6, 219	★★★	Humble, TX	Humble
Rivals.com's No. 31 athlete. ... No. 40 recruit in Texas. ... Also plans to play basketball at A&M. ... Father played for Aggies during the 1970s.					
LEWIS, Anthony	LB	6-2, 220	★★★★	Haltom City, TX	Haltom City
Rivals.com's No. 84 overall recruit. ... No. 8 outside linebacker. ... No. 13 recruit in Texas. ... Had 132 tackles and five sacks as a senior. ... Had 115 tackles, five sacks and three interceptions as a junior.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
McCOY, Terrence	WR	6-3, 198	★★★	Midland, TX	Lee
Rivals.com's No. 61 wide receiver. ... No. 68 recruit in Texas. ... Two-time All-District. ... Brother of Texas A&M quarterback Jamie McCoy. ... Caught 43 passes for 735 yards and six touchdowns as a senior.					
NEAL, Jarius	DB	6-3, 218	★★★★	Dacula, MS	East Central CC
Rivals.com's No. 27 overall junior college recruit. ... Had 64 tackles and six interceptions in first season as a safety in 2005. ... First-team All-Conference.					
PATTERSON, Lucas	OL	6-5, 290	★★★	Kingsville, TX	King
Rivals.com's No. 27 offensive tackle. ... No. 44 recruit in Texas. ... Father played for Texas A&M in 1979-80. ... Also had five sacks as a defensive lineman.					
PUGH, Jordan	DB	5-11, 177	★★★★	Plano, TX	West
Rivals.com's No. 21 cornerback. ... No. 27 recruit in Texas. ... Had 52 tackles with five interceptions as a senior. ... Also blocked a field goal. ... Intercepted three passes as a junior. ... All-State.					
RAY, Leslie	DT	6-2, 260	★★★	Midland, TX	Lee
Rivals.com's No. 49 offensive tackle. ... No. 81 recruit in Texas. ... Two-time All-State. ... Had 55 tackles and three sacks as a senior.					
SHANKLE, E.J.	RB	5-10, 180	★★★	Lufkin, TX	Lufkin
Rivals.com's No. 12 all-purpose back. ... No. 69 recruit in Texas. ... Caught 39 passes for 565 yards and three touchdowns. ... Rushed 42 times for 319 yards and five touchdowns.					
TARRANT, Cornell	RB	5-11, 185	★★★	Dallas	Samuel
Rivals.com's No. 39 running back. ... No. 84 recruit in Texas. ... Rushed 129 times for 587 yards and seven touchdowns as a senior.					
THOMPSON, DeMaurier	DB	6-0, 175	★★★	Dallas	White
Rivals.com's No. 52 safety. ... All-State honorable mention. ... Three-time All-District. ... Also runs track.					
TUPE, Misi	LB	6-1, 235	★★★	St. George, TX	Dixie State CC
Finalist for NJCAA Defensive Player of the Year. ... Had 94 tackles and five sacks last season. ... Signed with Utah out of high school.					
WILLIAMS, Cody	DE	6-4, 235	★★★	Longview, TX	Longview
Rivals.com's No. 35 strongside defensive end. ... No. 60 recruit in Texas. ... Had 47 tackles as a senior and 11 tackles for a loss. ... Second-team All-State.					

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
24	CHRIS ALEXANDER	RB	5-11	246	Jr	Humble	29	STEPHEN HODGE	LB	6-1	230	Jr	Richardson
8	MATT ALMARAZ	DB	5-10	198	So	San Antonio	89	JASON JACK	DL	6-4	275	Jr	Humble
41	DAVID ANDERSON	RB	5-9	188	Sr	Plano	22	JEFF KARR	DB	5-9	189	So	Richardson
40	BRANDON ARINGTON	RB	5-9	195	So	Cedar Hill	98	ANDREW KEY	TE	6-3	235	Fr	Dallas
35	JEREMY AXEL	RB	5-11	235	Jr	Missouri City	24	TYLER KOCIUBA	DB	6-0	191	Fr	Liberty Hill
71	YEMI BABALOLA	OL	6-4	308	So	Bryan	72	ALEX KOTZUR	OL	6-5	290	Sr	Houston
27	RICHIE BEAN	P/K	6-0	180	So	Marrero, LA	36	MATTHEW LAFON	DB	5-10	200	Sr	Magnolia
3	MARTELLUS BENNETT	TE	6-7	248	So	Alief	55	NICK LAMANTIA	LB	6-1	227	So	Edinburg
11	MICHAEL BENNETT	DL	6-4	263	So	Alief	11	JORVORSKIE LANE	RB	5-11	274	So	Lufkin
88	CODY BEYER	WR	6-1	180	Fr	San Antonio	21	DAVID LATHAM	DB	6-2	206	So	Coffeyville
9	BEN BITNER	DB	5-4	166	Jr	Round Rock	21	BRANDON LEONE	RB	6-0	223	Sr	Conroe
37	STEPHEN BLAZEK	LB	6-1	218	So	Bellville	25	COURTNEY LEWIS	RB	6-0	204	Sr	Houston
39	GREG BOOTHE	RB	6-1	221	Sr	LaGrange	29	DANIEL MACH	WR	5-11	198	So	Garland
44	JUSTIN BRANTLY	P	6-3	231	So	Sealy	59	ERIC MANN	LB	6-2	231	Jr	Webster
19	TY BRANYON	QB	6-3	213	Sr	Austin	42	NURAHDA MANNING	LB	6-3	247	Sr	Bay City
85	BLADNE BRAWLEY	WR	6-0	178	Fr	Jasper	63	KEVIN MATTHEWS	OL	6-3	296	Fr	Sugar Land
48	ARKEITH BROWN	DB	6-0	175	So	El Campo	16	JAMIE MCCOY	QB	6-2	216	Fr	Midland
28	JAPHUS BROWN	DB	5-11	203	Jr	Edna	7	STEPHEN MCGEE	QB	6-3	207	So	Burnet
46	JEREMY BROWN	WR	6-2	203	Fr	Fort Worth	34	TIM MCKAY	LB	6-0	216	Jr	Texas City
6	PIERRE BROWN	WR	6-1	203	So	Duncanville	96	WILLIAM MORRISSEY	DL	6-2	359	So	Silsbee
66	KEVIN BRYAN	OL	6-2	290	So	Lufkin	5	HOWARD MORROW	WR	6-0	215	So	Keller
85	RED BRYANT	DL	6-5	330	Jr	Jasper	68	KYLE NAIL	OL	6-0	262	Jr	Daingerfield
30	CHEVAR BRYSON	DB	6-0	186	Fr	Midland	32	LAYNE NEUMANN	PLK	6-0	175	Sr	Hondo
33	MELVIN BULLITT	DB	6-1	204	Sr	Garland	20	BROCK NEWTON	DB	5-11	189	Jr	Fort Worth
80	LORENZO CALLOWAY	WR	5-10	167	So	Houston	49	CYRIL OBOZOR	DL	6-4	270	So	Pearland
40	JARRET CANTU	LB	6-2	222	Fr	McAllen	38	RYAN O'BRYAN	RB	5-11	227	Fr	Houston
13	MARQUIS CARPENTER	DB	6-0	179	Jr	Melbourne, FL	58	ALEX OTT	OL	6-4	276	Jr	Albuquerque, NM
69	EVAN CARSON	DL	5-11	202	Fr	Lucas	65	JOSEPH PARRISH	OL	6-0	246	Sr	Kingwood
49	ANTHONY CARTER	WR	6-1	196	So	Jacksboro	82	ANTONIO PERRY	WR	6-1	175	Fr	Hammond, LA
5	JORDAN CHAMBLESS	DB	6-1	208	So	Corpus Christi	27	JORDAN PETERSON	DB	5-10	192	Fr	Lexington
54	COREY CLARK	OL	6-6	311	Jr	Spring Branch	53	J. POND	OL	6-5	317	Fr	Abilene
20	MICHAEL COREY	WR	6-3	209	Jr	Delta, UT	87	JASON RAY	WR	6-4	202	Jr	McGregor
38	CHRIS CUREL	DB	6-0	196	Sr	San Antonio	35	BRYCE REED	DL	6-1	304	Sr	Dallas
47	CORY DAVIS	DS	6-0	256	So	Conroe	46	JODIE RICHARDSON	LB	6-1	224	Fr	Duncanville
37	KYLE DAVIS	K	6-0	183	Fr	Midland	98	DUSTY RIEWE	LB	6-0	228	So	Elgin
31	DAVID DE LA FOSSE	K	5-11	181	Fr	Houston	17	LYDRICK RILEY	WR	6-2	238	Sr	Crockett
77	GRANT DICKEY	OL	6-5	313	Sr	Tyler	58	TREY ROSS	LB	6-3	220	Fr	Alief
16	ALTON DIXON	DB	5-11	207	So	Lufkin	60	JOSH RUSSELL	OL	6-4	337	Fr	Waxahachie
50	MARK DODGE	LB	6-2	219	Jr	Yerington, NV	31	HUSANI SALLAH	RB	5-8	170	Fr	Houston
53	DERRICK DUMAS	LB	6-1	217	Fr	Waco	18	T.J. SANDERS	QB	6-3	211	Jr	Goddard, KS
64	KIRK ELDER	OL	6-4	312	Jr	Klein	22	TRAVIS SAWTELLE	DB	6-0	177	Fr	San Antonio
61	JOHN FAROUHAR	DL	6-7	284	Jr	Round Rock	73	TRAVIS SCHNEIDER	OL	6-7	298	So	Bellville
45	RAWLEY FARRELL	DB	6-0	195	Jr	East Bernard	14	CHAD SCHROEDER	WR	6-1	181	Sr	Austin
41	MATT FEATHERSTON	LB	6-2	250	Fr	Poughkeepsie, NY	78	MICHAEL SHUMARD	OL	6-5	299	Fr	Fort Hood
8	KERRY FRANKS	WR	5-10	185	Jr	Orange	84	CHRIS SMITH	DL	6-5	270	So	Allen
93	PAUL FREENEY	DL	6-3	262	Fr	Aldine	95	HENRY SMITH	DL	6-3	318	Jr	Aliceville, AL
79	ROBBIE FROST	OL	6-6	304	Fr	Houston	26	KEONDRAS SMITH	RB	5-9	207	Fr	Tyler
86	AMOS GBUNBLEE	TE	6-5	256	So	Cypress	47	BLAKE STEADMAN	LB	6-3	243	Sr	Houston
89	ERIC GEORGE	WR/K	6-0	161	Fr	College Station	2	EARVIN TAYLOR	WR	6-3	244	Jr	Mission
67	SAM GIESSELMANN	DS	6-4	208	So	Arlington	32	SAMSON TAYLOR	RB	6-0	205	So	Houston
23	BRANDT GOEKE	WR	6-0	170	So	Brenham	81	JOEY THOMAS	TE	6-5	248	Jr	Austin
34	MARCUS GOLD	DB	5-7	180	Fr	Irving	94	MARQUES THORNTON	DL	6-1	288	Sr	Houston
44	WESTON GOOCH	DB	6-0	197	Fr	Salado	91	RYAN VAUGHAN	TE	6-4	247	So	Hurst
4	DANNY GORRER	DB	6-0	182	So	Port Arthur	70	CODY WALLACE	OL	6-4	296	Jr	Cuero
26	DEVIN GREGG	DB	5-11	195	So	Spring	83	TERRANCE WARD	WR	5-10	207	So	Wharton
56	LEE GRIMES	OL	6-6	326	Fr	Brownwood	10	JUSTIN WARREN	LB	6-3	245	Sr	Tyler
17	NATHAN HAILE	LB	6-0	217	Jr	Friona	80	VINCENT WILLIAMS	DL	6-4	310	Fr	Dallas
52	JOHN HAMILTON	LB	6-1	214	So	Belton	84	DREW WILLIAMSON	WR	6-2	196	So	Southlake
92	CHRIS HARRINGTON	DL	6-5	263	Jr	Houston	39	MIKE WITTE	DB	5-9	181	Fr	Colleyville
91	KELLEN HEARD	DL	6-5	334	Jr	Wharton	10	JEFF WOOD	QB	6-5	210	Fr	Houston
25	CHARLES HEWITT	DB	6-4	210	Fr	Richmond	51	CHRIS YODER	OL	6-3	318	Jr	Houston

Eight A&M players were lost to season-ending injuries in 2005. The Aggies lost more than 70 combined games, among scholarship players, because of injuries.

The trend continued when backup offensive lineman **Lee Grimes** tore an ACL during the spring scrimmage. He is not expected to be ready for fall practices.

But coach **Dennis Franchione** did say that some of the key performers who missed spring contact drills in an effort to fully recover from 2005 injuries — players like defensive back **Japhus Brown** and wide receiver **L'Tydrick Riley** — should be ready for full contact in August.

• When fall camp begins, A&M could have use of its new indoor practice facility. The 12th Man Foundation, A&M's athletic fundraising organization, received a \$9 million lead gift from the Artie and Dorothy McFerrin family for the proposed \$20 million facility.

• Franchione redshirted all but four freshmen in his first two seasons at A&M. But due to injuries in 2005, he used nine true freshmen last year, including five who earned starts.

"The best part about that is that those guys are sophomores now," Franchione said. "We may have a few true freshmen who make a major impact this year, but I don't anticipate as many (as last year)."

• Franchione's 2006 Leadership Council, an advisory group the coach has utilized since his days as a head coach at New Mexico, are: quarterback **Ty Branyon**, defensive lineman **Red Bryant**, defensive back **Melvin Bullitt**, linebacker **Mark Dodge**, offensive lineman **Kirk Elder**, defensive back **Devin Gregg**, defensive lineman **Chris Harrington**, linebacker **Nick LaMantia**, quarterback **Stephen McGee**, wide receiver **L'Tydrick Riley**, wide receiver **Chad Schroeder**, wide receiver **Earvin Taylor**, offensive lineman **Cody Wallace** and linebacker **Justin Warren**.

• Senior safety **Melvin Bullitt** said it didn't take long to notice an attitude difference on defense during the spring. "We had guys last year who were hoping someone else would make the tackle or interception," Bullitt said. "This spring, we had everyone trying to get to the ball, trying to get their names in the paper."

(5-8, 3-5)

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
McNeal	10	128.56	265	141	9	53.2	1963	16	40	196.3
McGee	8	98.82	53	24	1	45.3	283	2	80	35.4

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Lewis	9	109	735	12	723	6.6	7	73	80.3
McNeal	10	98	780	116	664	6.9	3	63	66.4
Lane	10	119	606	11	595	5.0	9	39	59.5

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Carter	11	54	827	15.3	6	71	75.2
Schroeder	8	20	335	16.8	5	44	41.9
Mobley	10	19	252	13.3	0	60	25.2

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Ryans 76, Harper 69, Roach 66
Interceptions: Carpenter 4, Appel 3, Bullitt 2
Sacks: Jolly 5, Warren 3
Tackles for loss: Jolly 11.5, Warren 6

Results

L	at Clemson	24-25
W	SMU	66-8
W	Texas State	44-31
W	Baylor	OT 16-13
L	at Colorado	20-41
W	Oklahoma State	62-23
W	at Kansas State	30-28
L	Iowa State	14-42
L	at Texas Tech	17-56
L	at Oklahoma	30-36
L	Texas	29-40



MELVIN BULLITT

"We know our ability to improve this year will be largely based on the improvement of our defense," Franchione said.

Based on experience and improved speed, the 2006 version should be better than the one that finished 107th nationally in total defense last year. How much better will go a long way toward determining whether A&M will be a contender for a minor bowl or for the Big 12 South title.

Defensive coordinator Gary Darnell will utilize a 4-2-5 alignment, and the

secondary is filled with enough talented athletes to make the scheme work. The trio of safeties — Japhus Brown, Melvin Bullitt and Devin Gregg — provide plenty of playmaking potential, while speedy cornerbacks Marquis Carpenter and Danny Gorrer are steadily improving.

The Aggies are thin at linebacker, although Justin Warren is a terrific athlete and a first-team All-Big 12 prospect after averaging nearly 10 tackles per game last season. The other starting spot could be manned by 25-year-old junior college transfer Mark Dodge, who previously served in the Presidential Honor Guard and was inside the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

Junior Chris Harrington is a steady and dependable force along the defensive front, while Red Bryant and Jason Jack — when healthy — feature star potential. Sophomore Michael Bennett is a promising youngster at defensive end.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The return game has been virtually non-existent the past two years. A&M ranked 116th nationally in kickoff returns in 2004, and only improved to 109th last season. Franchione is hopeful speedsters like Kerry Franks, Howard Morrow and Pierre Brown can provide significant improvement.

The Aggies also are hoping either Layne Neumann or Richie Bean can fill the dependable shoes of four-year place-kicker Todd Pegram, who set the school record for career field goal accuracy (74.7 percent).

The one proven area on special teams

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Stephen McGee

It's not about numbers, 40-yard dash times, arm strength or bench press maximums, although McGee is impressive in all of those areas. What defines him are the intangible qualities. He's as tough as a boot, and he truly inspires his teammates, which was obvious when he took over against Oklahoma and Texas. ... He completed 24 of 53 passes last season, and is expected to improve on that accuracy. ... McGee's running skills were evident, as he carried 43 times for 235 yards.



EMERGING STAR

TE Martellus Bennett

The outspoken and engaging Bennett caught 18 passes for 162 yards and three touchdowns last year as a true freshman. Then he helped the Aggie basketball team earn its first NCAA Tournament invitation since 1987. ... With a year's experience, the 6-7 Bennett is poised for a breakout season. He's a pure athlete and a constant source of entertainment — on the fields and courts and off.



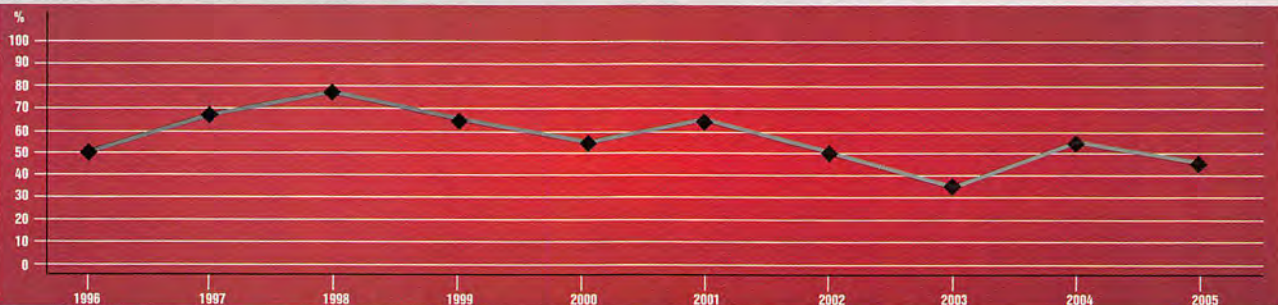
TOP NEWCOMER

RB Mike Goodson

Linebackers Mark Dodge and Anthony Lewis are prime candidates here, but the nod goes to Goodson because of the multiple skills he brings to the lineup. ... At Klein (Texas) Collins High School, Goodson battled an ankle injury and missed most of the team's first four games last fall. But he still finished with 973 yards and eight touchdowns on just 99 carries. ... He was one of the most impressive players at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio. By the end of the season, don't be surprised if Goodson is the featured back in A&M's attack.



Texas A&M's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

STEPHEN MCGEE



Photo by Robert Seale/Sporting News

Ready to Compete in Any Situation

One of Stephen McGee's most endearing qualities is that he never takes a practice or a play off. He never loafs; never coasts.

The 6-3 sophomore plays every snap like it might be his last, savoring every opportunity to compete at maximum effort on the field. Off the field, as well.

That all-encompassing competitive drive has quickly won the respect of McGee's teammates. But it hasn't won him any brownie points with his girlfriend, who spontaneously made

a dash to the car in a store parking lot in an attempt to beat her driven boyfriend in a footrace.

McGee gave her a nice head start, but then he won the race. At least that's his version of the story.

"Whether it's racing my girlfriend to the car when we leave Wal-Mart, or if it's a ping-pong game, I love to compete," McGee said.

"That's my trademark. I hate to lose more than I like to win. That's just the competitive side of me coming out, and I love to compete in every situation."

McGee is also his harshest critic.

When Reggie McNeal was injured in the third quarter at Oklahoma, McGee twice rallied the Aggies to within six points in what eventually was a 36-30 loss. Then, in his first career start against eventual national champion Texas, McGee's grit gave the Aggies a third-quarter lead and kept A&M within striking distance until late in the fourth quarter.

But if you ask McGee about those performances, don't expect glowing reviews.

"We got beat in those two games, and that's the end of the story," McGee said.

"It wasn't good enough, and you've got to get better from it and learn what you can do to win. I'll take the worst game of my life and a one-point win any day over the best game of my life and a one-point loss.

"It's all about winning and playing together. The bottom line is that I'm 0-1 as a starter right now and we were 5-6 last year. We've got to get this thing where we need it to be."

His record as a starting quarterback will soon improve. McGee likely lead the Aggies back to a bowl game this season. He certainly won't allow A&M to look past any opponent. His girlfriend would attest to that.

is punter Justin Brantly, who broke Shane Lechler's freshman school record by averaging 43.2 yards per attempt.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Texas A&M will undoubtedly take a beating from the media for its non-conference schedule. But after playing the likes of Utah, Virginia Tech, Pittsburgh and Clemson in his first three seasons at A&M, Franchione makes no apologies for this year's slate that features The Citadel, Louisiana-Lafayette, Army (in San Antonio) and Louisiana Tech.

"The thing you can see is that we don't have to open the season on the road at Clemson or on the road at Utah," Franchione said. "It is, by far, the best starting schedule we've had in terms of not having to play a premier team on the road."

The conference race heats up quickly, as the Aggies play host to Texas Tech in the Big 12 opener. A&M also gets Oklahoma and Nebraska at home, while the road schedule is manageable, with games at Kansas, Oklahoma State and Baylor before ending the year at Texas.

— Rusty Burson

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 THE CITADEL

Sept. 9 LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Sept. 16 vs. Army (San Antonio)

Sept. 23 LOUISIANA TECH

Sept. 30 TEXAS TECH

Oct. 7 at Kansas

Oct. 14 MISSOURI

Oct. 21 at Oklahoma State

Oct. 28 at Baylor

Nov. 4 OKLAHOMA

Nov. 11 NEBRASKA

Nov. 24 at Texas



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RED RAIDERS

For more coverage of the Red Raiders, visit www.texastechrivals.com

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AT A GLANCE

2005

9-3 overall, 6-2 Big 12 (2nd, South)

COACH

Mike Leach — At Texas Tech and overall: 48-28, 6 years

RETURNING STARTERS

15; 8 offense, 5 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WR Joel Filani, WR Jarrett Hicks, WR Robert Johnson, WR Danny Amendola, OL Manuel Ramirez, LB Keyunta Dawson, LB Fletcher Session, CB Antonio Huffman

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

With four outstanding receivers and Leach's proven passing system, the Raiders once again will produce gaudy numbers through the air, regardless of who starts at quarterback. The defensive front seven, led by Keyunta Dawson and Fletcher Session, can also go toe-to-toe with practically any opponent.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Losing RB Taurean Henderson could leave a gaping hole. The secondary lost three starters, and that unit could be a source of problems.

KEY LOSSES

RB Taurean Henderson, QB Cody Hodges, SS Vincent Meeks, FS Dwayne Slay, CB Khalid Naziruddin

OVERVIEW

The offense will once again be high-octane and highly entertaining; that's a given. If the secondary can quickly and adequately replace three starters, the underrated defense should be strong enough to keep the Raiders in any game. But the key to Tech making a serious push at a league title and BCS berth will be its ability to perform well on the road.

BCS or Bust: Red Raiders Primed for Next Step

Early last December, Texas Tech's football program and its one-of-a-kind head coach Mike Leach were featured in a monstrous article in — of all publications — *The New York Times*.

The author of the article, Michael Lewis, used more than 8,600 words to paint an elaborate picture of Leach's peculiar perspectives and influence on the game — particularly the passing game.

But the lengthy story could be summed up succinctly: Leach marches to the beat of a different drummer. Always has. Always will.

It's just that now, after leading Tech to six consecutive bowl games, overseeing the nation's leading passing attack in each of the past four years and appearing in the Big Apple's premier print, Leach is no longer Lubbock's little well-kept secret.

He's national.

Likewise, the Red Raiders are intent on taking their game to the national headline level. Winning nine games last season earned Tech its first post-New Year's Eve bowl invitation since 1995 and just the second for the school since 1965.

Still, the January appearance had a decidedly regional feeling to it since the Raiders were in Dallas' Cotton Bowl. Then, in the aftermath of Tech's 13-10 loss to Alabama, the Raiders watched in-state rival Texas upend USC to claim the national championship.

That experience hammered home a thought that was already running through the minds of many of the Tech players: BCS or bust in 2006.

"To see what Texas did this past year

and to know that they have to come to our place this year gets you thinking," Texas Tech wide receiver/punt returner Danny Amendola said.

"We've taken some big steps in the right direction the past couple of years, and we feel like we're building something really special."

How special?

"We're not just hoping to get back to a bowl this year," said linebacker Fletcher Session. "We're working every day toward a BCS berth. That's what we're all about. It's time for us to really step it up and take our game to the next level."

That thought probably defies conventional wisdom. But that's also what Leach is all about.

Tech must plug some significant holes (the Raiders need to replace a quarterback once again) and survive some serious road tests before it can even begin to focus on battling Texas for a possible shot at the conference crown.

That might be a long shot. Nevertheless, it's apparent that these Raiders are no longer merely a regional presence. They're on the verge of becoming national headliners.

OFFENSE

Leach didn't earn his eccentric reputation overnight. He has earned it the hard way, through years of steadily and readily going against the norm.

For example, many head coaches labor all spring to determine an accurate depth chart, especially at quarterback. But Leach has little use for post-spring two-



Jarrett Hicks Photo by James Smith/Icon SMI



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 107.0 ypg rushing (11th Big 12/104th NCAA), 388.8 ypg passing (1st/1st), 495.8 ypg total offense (2nd/6th), 39.4 ppg (2nd/4th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Graham Harrell	So.	Completed 67 percent last year (37 of 55) as a backup.	Chris Todd, Fr.
RB	Shannon Woods	So.	Potentially explosive ... but rather inexperienced.	Kobey Lewis, Fr.
WR	Jarrett Hicks*	Sr.	Already holds school record for TD catches with 28.	Todd Walker, So.
WR	Joel Filani*	Sr.	Averaged team-high 15.5 yards per catch in '05.	Edward Britton, Fr.
WR	Robert Johnson*	Sr.	Former top juco QB led team with 67 catches last year.	Grant Walker, Jr.
SB	Danny Amendola*	Jr.	Quick and elusive; averaged 9.8 yards on punt returns.	L.A. Reed, So.
LT	Glenn January*	Sr.	At 6-7, his reach is even longer than his hair.	Marlon Winn, Fr.
LG	Louis Vasquez	Fr.	Played in five games as true freshman.	Ofa Mohetau, Jr.
C	Brandon Jones*	Sr.	Quick and solid in pass protection.	Josh Aleman, So.
RG	Manuel Ramirez*	Sr.	Hard-nosed leader of the offensive line.	Brandon Carter, Fr.
RT	Gabe Hall*	Sr.	Former tight end has very quick feet.	Andrew Johnson, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 155.4 ypg rushing (10th Big 12/67th NCAA), 180.4 ypg passing (2nd/15th), 335.8 ypg total defense (5th/30th), 18.8 ppg (2nd/18th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	McKinner Dixon*	So.	Earned Freshman All-American honors in '05 (six TFLs).	Jared Williams, So.
NT	Chris Hudler*	Sr.	A vocal and physical leader up front.	Brian Jones, So.
DT	Ken Scott*	Sr.	Has 80 career tackles and three sacks.	Dek Bake, Sr.
DE	Seth Nitschmann	Sr.	Back after season-ending injury in '05; 44 tackles in '04.	Tyler Yenzler, Jr.
LB	Fletcher Session*	Sr.	Leading returning tackler with 81.	Brent Slaughter, Sr.
LB	Brock Stratton	Jr.	Dependable run-stopper in the middle.	Paul Williams, Jr.
LB	Keyunta Dawson	Sr.	Last year's big-play end is now a rush linebacker.	Kellen Tillman, Sr.
CB	Antonio Huffman*	Sr.	Only returning starter in the secondary.	Marcus Bunton, So.
CB	Chris Parker	Jr.	Had 19 tackles and five passes broken up as a reserve.	Brent Nickerson, Fr.
SS	Joe Garcia	Jr.	Special teams star is ready to start.	Anthony Hines, So.
FS	Darcel McBath	So.	Former cornerback is a big-hitter at free safety.	Lance Fuller, So.

*Returning starter

deep charts, especially at quarterback.

So, for yet another year, the Raiders entered the summer with no definitive starter at quarterback. But Tech fans are hardly worried. In the past four seasons, the Raiders have used four different starting quarterbacks (Kliff Kingsbury, B.J. Symons, Sonny Cumbie and Cody Hodges). With each new marksman, the result has been the same: Tech leads the nation in passing.

Things shouldn't change much this year. Regardless of whether it's sophomore Graham Harrell or redshirt freshman Chris Todd who eventually assumes control of the Raiders' high-powered reins, Tech should — again — have one of the nation's most feared passing attacks.

In fact, Harrell and Todd bring more

impressive credentials to the lineup than most of their predecessors. Harrell ran a spread attack in high school, passing for 4,825 yards and 67 touchdowns as a senior. Todd also was a prized prospect after throwing for 10,768 yards in his high school career.

Either quarterback will benefit from the return of one of the nation's finest collections of receivers. Robert Johnson, Joel Filani and Jarrett Hicks combined to catch 197 passes last fall.

Johnson, the 2005 Big 12 Offensive Newcomer of the Year, led the team with 67 receptions last year, while Hicks already owns the school record for career receiving touchdowns with 28. And Filani might have been the best of the bunch, averaging 15.5 yards per catch last season. Danny Amendola is also an extremely

entertaining and game-breaking presence.

Tech's offensive line, led by All-Big 12 candidates Manuel Ramirez and Glenn January, is solid. Although it will be difficult to replace record-setting Taurean Henderson in the backfield, Shannon Woods, Taurance Rawls and Kobey Lewis do possess big-play skills.

DEFENSE

The defensive line is deep enough that the Raiders moved perhaps their biggest defensive star (Keyunta Dawson) from rush end to outside linebacker.

Dawson, an All-Big 12 performer last year who has 13.5 career sacks, made a relatively smooth transition during the spring, helping to make the front seven an imposing and explosive unit.



Michael Crabtree, ATH

Being the best athlete on his Dallas Carter team, the 6-1, 190-pound Crabtree played quarterback but has a bright future as a receiver at the next level. Crabtree was a Rivals250 selection. He had 15 total touchdowns through the air and on the ground as a junior. Crabtree should get a chance to earn a spot right away.



Jamar Wall, ATH

Wall was an all-around performer for Plainview starting his junior year. With the chance to play running back at Tech, Wall should fight for a spot come fall. The running back situation for the Red Raiders is somewhat open for competition and the 5-10, 180-pounder will get a big look.



Baron Batch, RB

The recruitment of Batch was a full force job for the Tech staff, but his addition to the class adds more depth to the running back position. His senior year was well-noticed by several programs after rushing for more than 2,000 yards and 30 touchdowns. Watch out for the in-state runner to make an early impact.



Julius Howard, LB

Certainly not the biggest linebacker for the class of 2006, Howard has all the talent to be great at the next level. The three-star rated 6-0, 220 pound prospect started picking up interest late in the process. Offers followed from several programs as Howard's film began making its way around to different programs. His 62-tackle performance through only four games as a junior put him on the map. Howard should thrive after a redshirt year and really make his mark at Tech as his career goes forward.

Commitments	34
Average Stars	2.88
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	4
★★★☆☆	22
★★☆☆☆	8
Total Stars	98
National Rank: 26	Big 12: 6

2007 NEEDS

As usual, Tech will be looking for quarterbacks to add depth behind Graham Harrell and Chris Todd. Some heavy talent will leave at receiver meaning the Red Raiders will look far and wide for talented pass-catchers. The switch in the base defense will directly impact the need for linebackers. They'll also look to add specific players to the defensive backfield.

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
ARCHIE, Adrian	OL	6-5, 285	★★	Huntsville, TX	Huntsville
All-State honorable mention. ... First-team All-District.					
BATCH, Baron	RB	5-10, 190	★★★	Midland, TX	Midland
Rivals.com's No. 23 running back. ... No. 47 recruit in Texas. ... Rushed for 2,005 yards and 28 touchdowns as a senior.					
BAZIEL, Dewayne	DE	6-3, 233	★★★	Galveston, TX	Ball
Rivals.com's No. 43 weakside defensive end. ... Had 6.5 sacks as a senior.					
BRUNIT, Buddy	OL	6-3, 285	★★★	Garland, TX	Garland
Rivals.com's No. 33 offensive guard. ... No. 82 recruit in Texas.					
COLLIER, Blake	LB	6-2, 208	★★★	Justin, TX	Northwest
Rivals.com's No. 28 inside linebacker. ... No. 85 recruit in Texas. ... Had 72 tackles and three interceptions as a senior.					
CRABTREE, Michael	ATH	6-1, 190	★★★★	Dallas	Carter
Rivals250 member. ... No. 16 athlete. ... No. 22 recruit in Texas. ... Passed for 870 yards and ran for 646 as quarterback.					
CRAWFORD, Jockues	RB	5-11, 208	★★★	Cordova, TN	Cordova
Rivals.com's No. 45 running back. ... No. 18 recruit in Tennessee. ... Played only for games in 2005.					
DAVIS, Ben	OL	6-8, 292	★★	Boerne, TX	Boerne
Boerne rushed for 256 yards per game.					
DUGGINS, Tyler	OL	6-6, 265	★★	Iowa Park, TX	Iowa Park
First-team All-District as a junior.					
DUNCAN, Brian	LB	6-2, 228	★★★	Baton Rouge, LA	Tara
Rivals.com's No. 37 inside linebacker. ... No. 22 recruit in Louisiana. ... First-team All-State.					
ESTELLE, Sean	DE	6-3, 245	★★★	Missouri City, TX Ft Bend Marshall	
Rivals.com's No. 52 strongside defensive end. ... Two-time first-team All-District.					
HARRIS, Steven	DB	5-11, 180	★★★	Lewisville, TX	Hebron
District co-defensive Player of the Year. ... Had six interceptions in the state playoffs.					
HENLEY, Ra'Jon	DT	6-3, 250	★★★	Galveston, TX	Ball
Rivals.com's No. 38 defensive tackle. ... No. 58 recruit in Texas. ... Had five sacks as a senior.					
HEWITT, Leonard	DB	5-10, 175	★★★★	Lufkin, TX	Lufkin
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 8 safety. ... No. 24 recruit in Texas.					
HOLLINS, Jonathan	DE	6-3, 228	★★★	Baton Rouge, LA Redemptorist	
Rivals.com's No. 38 weakside defensive end. ... No. 18 recruit in Louisiana. ... Had seven sacks in 2005.					
HOWARD, Julius	LB	6-0, 220	★★★	Irving, TX	Nimitz
Rivals.com's No. 50 inside linebacker. ... All-State honorable mention.					
JAMES, Adam	TE	6-5, 230	★★★	Celina, TX	Celina
Enrolled for spring semester. ... Caught 24 passes for 374 yards and four touchdowns as a senior.					

NAME	Pos.	Ht., Wt.	STARS	HOMETOWN	SCHOOL
JOHNSON, Daniel	DB	6-3, 195	★★★★	Houston	Spring Woods
Rivals250 member. ... Rivals.com's No. 13 safety. ... No. 36 recruit in Texas. ... Missed most of 2005 with an injury.					
JONES, Richard	DT	6-0, 265	★★★	La Marque, TX	La Marque
Rivals.com's No. 50 defensive tackle. ... No. 83 recruit in Texas.					
LEONG, Lyle	WR	6-2, 158	★★	Abilene, TX	Abilene
Enrolled for spring semester. ... First-team All-State. ... Had 1,250 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns.					
LOTT, Dimitri	OL	6-2, 271	★★★	Missouri City, TX Ft Bend Marshall	
Rivals.com's No. 42 offensive guard. ... First-team All-State.					
MARSHALL, Broderick	DT	6-5, 260	★★	Austin, TX	McCallum
District defensive MVP. ... Had three sacks as a senior.					
MITCHEM, Franklin	DB	6-3, 200	★★★	Klein, TX	Collins
Rivals.com's No. 39 safety. ... No. 86 recruit in Texas.					
MOHETAU, Ota	OL	6-3, 340	★★★★	Visalia, CA College of Sequoias	
Rivals.com's No. 10 overall junior college recruit. ... Rivals.com's No. 1 offensive guard out of high school in 2003. ... Started eight games as a true freshman at BYU.					
MOORE, LaRon	DB	5-9, 179	★★★	Midwest City, OK	Midwest City
Rivals.com's No. 36 cornerback. ... No. 11 recruit in Oklahoma. ... USA Today second-team All-American.					
OLSON, Chris	OL	6-5, 280	★★★	Dallas	Highland Park
Rivals.com's No. 35 offensive tackle. ... No. 75 recruit in Texas. ... All-State.					
POTTS, Taylor	QB	6-5, 210	★★★★	Abilene, TX	Abilene
Rivals.com's No. 13 pro-style quarterback. ... No. 45 recruit in Texas. ... Completed 230 of 332 passes for 3,155 yards and 23 touchdowns as a senior.					
REESE, Adrian	TE	6-6, 205	★★★	Longview, TX	Longview
Rivals.com's No. 47 tight end. ... Caught 15 passes for 359 yards and two touchdowns as a senior.					
REILLY, Trevor	LB	6-5, 200	★★	San Diego	Valley Central
Will serve two-year Mormon mission before enrolling at Tech.					
ROUTT, Jarell	DB	6-0, 187	★★	Texas City, TX	Texas City
All-State honorable mention. ... Also played running back and wide receiver.					
WALL, Jamar	ATH	5-10, 180	★★★★	Plainview, TX	Plainview
Rivals.com's No. 37 athlete. ... No. 55 recruit in Texas. ... Recruited as a cornerback. ... Rushed for 2,735 yards and 42 touchdowns as a senior.					
WARD, Dan'Tay	DT	6-2, 291	★★★	Waco, TX	Waco
Rivals.com's No. 66 defensive tackle. ... First-team All-District. ... Four sacks as a senior.					
WILLIAMS, Brandon	DE	6-3, 245	★★	Fort Worth, TX	South Hill
Had 102 tackles and 11 sacks as a senior. ... First-team All-District.					
WILLIAMS, Marlon	LB	5-11, 209	★★★★	Pflugerville, TX	Pflugerville
Rivals.com's No. 43 inside linebacker. ... Had 86 tackles and 500 rushing yards as a senior.					

RED RAIDERS SPRING ROSTER

NOTEBOOK

No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN	No.	NAME	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	CLASS	HOMETOWN
72	JOSH ALEMAN	C	6-3	308	So	Sherman		RICHARD JONES	DT	6-2	265	Fr	LaMarque
20	DANNY AMENDOLA	IR	5-11	176	Jr	The Woodlands		LYLE LEONG	WR	6-2	168	Fr	Abilene
	ADRIAN ARCHIE	OL	6-5	285	Fr	Huntsville	37	KOBEY LEWIS	RB	5-6	167	Fr	Abilene
3	THOMAS BACHMAN	IR	5-9	185	Jr	Shreveport, LA	68	ROSS LEWIS	OL	6-2	293	Sr	Dallas
51	DEK BAKE	DT	6-5	268	Sr	Sacramento, CA	59	TY LINDER	LB	6-3	206	Jr	Austin
66	CODY BAKER	OL	6-5	287	So	Rowlett		DIMITRI LOTT	OL	6-2	271	Fr	Missouri City
	BARON BATCHE	RB	5-10	190	Fr	Midland	73	NICK MARQUEZ	DL	6-2	274	Jr	Lubbock
	DEWAYNE BAZIEL	LB	6-3	233	Fr	Galveston		BRODERICK MARSHALL	DT	6-4	278	Fr	Austin
92	GRANT BERG	K	6-5	198	So	Houston	7	DARCEL MCBATH	S	6-1	193	So	Gainesville
61	MICHAEL BETTENHAUSEN	DS	6-3	259	Jr	Piano	26	AUSTIN MICKELSON	TE	6-3	251	Fr	Arlington
34	JUSTIN BRADLEY	RB	5-7	185	Jr	Arlington		FRANKLIN MITCHEM	S	6-3	200	Fr	Klein
27	EDWARD BRITTON	WR	6-0	177	Fr	El Paso		OFA MOHETAU	OL	6-3	340	Jr	Eules
	BUDDY BRUMIT	OL	6-3	285	Fr	Garland	12	ERIC MORRIS	IR	5-9	174	So	Shallowater
28	MARCUS BUNTON	CB	5-8	187	So	Taylor		LARON MOORE	DB	5-9	179	Fr	Midwest City, OK
75	LONDON BURGE	OL	6-3	290	Fr	Leander	33	BRENT NICKERSON	CB	6-0	171	Fr	Irving
50	AUSTIN BURNS	DS	5-10	238	Fr	Midland	92	SETH NITSCHMANN	DE	6-4	248	Sr	Corpus Christi
64	SHAWN BYRNES	OL	6-3	318	Fr	Phoenix, AZ		CHRIS OLSON	OL	6-5	280	Fr	Dallas
60	BRANDON CARTER	OL	6-6	351	Fr	Longview	17	CHRIS PARKER	CB	5-11	177	Jr	Dallas
10	DANIEL CHARBONNET	S	6-0	189	So	The Woodlands	11	DAVID PILGRIM	IR	5-10	173	Jr	San Antonio
	BLAKE COLLIER	LB	6-2	208	Fr	Justin		TAYLOR POTTS	QB	6-5	210	Fr	Abilene
13	JAMES CONWRIGHT	CB	5-10	176	Jr	Lubbock	63	MANUEL RAMIREZ	OL	6-4	328	Sr	Houston
	MICHAEL CRABTREE	WR	6-2	215	Fr	Dallas	98	JAKE RATLIFF	DE	6-6	249	So	Lawton, OK
	JOCQUES CRAWFORD	RB	5-11	208	Fr	Cordova, TN	47	JOE BOB RATLIFF	DE	6-1	220	Fr	Midland
8	CHRIS CRUZ	S	5-11	213	Sr	Lubbock	18	TAURANCE RAWLS	RB	5-10	200	Jr	Garland
85	CHRIS CUNGAN	WR	6-2	183	Fr	Wills Point	18	TAYLOR READ	S	6-1	224	Jr	O'Donnell
	BEN DAVIS	OL	6-8	292	Fr	Boerne	86	L.A. REED	IR	6-2	203	So	Conroe
96	KEYUNTA DAWSON	LB	6-2	248	Sr	Shreveport, LA	74	RYLAN REED	OL	6-6	273	So	Dallas
91	MCKINNEY DIXON	DE	6-3	265	So	Lufkin		ADRIAN REESE	TE	6-6	205	Fr	Longview
87	MICHAEL DORSEY	IR	6-5	234	Sr	Arlington		TREVOR REILLY	LB	6-5	200	Fr	San Diego, CA
	TYLER DUGGINS	OL	6-7	275	Fr	Iowa Park	22	ALEX REYES	P	6-1	226	Sr	Allen
	BRIAN DUNCAN	LB	6-2	228	Fr	Baton Rouge, LA	31	PETE RICHARDSON	RB	5-9	184	Fr	Muskogee, OK
38	LANE ELLINBURG	LB	6-1	209	Fr	Jacksboro	46	SANDY RILEY	LB	6-1	257	Fr	Houston
14	K.J. ELLIS	S	6-2	207	Fr	Arlington	20	BRANDON RITCHIE	P	5-11	209	Sr	San Antonio
	SEAN ESTELLE	DE	6-3	245	Fr	Missouri City	24	THOMAS RODGERS	WR	6-3	205	Fr	Missouri City
8	JOEL FILANI	WR	6-3	214	Sr	Phoenix, AZ		JARELL ROUTT	DB	6-0	187	Fr	Texas City
37	CORY FOWLER	K	5-8	160	So	The Woodlands	27	JORDY ROWLAND	S	6-1	191	So	Nazareth
24	LANCE FULLER	S	6-0	217	So	Smithson Valley	7	RYAN ROWLAND	QB	6-3	202	Jr	Midland
13	BRIAN GALINDO	K/P	5-10	169	Fr	San Antonio	29	DAVID SCHAEFER	IR	6-4	223	Jr	Cisco
49	JOE GARCIA	S	6-2	206	Jr	Clovis, NM	99	KEN SCOTT	DL	6-2	327	Sr	Newton
84	J.J. GRIFFIN	WR	5-10	206	So	Odessa	42	FLETCHER SESSION	LB	6-0	232	Sr	Tyler
50	RYAN HALE	LB	6-0	219	Fr	Baytown	53	CALIN SHEARER	LB	6-1	221	So	Austin
78	GABE HALL	OL	6-4	293	Sr	Lubbock	11	BRENT SLAUGHTER	LB	6-1	209	Sr	Wimberley
71	STEPHEN HAMBY	OL	6-3	291	So	San Antonio	77	DAVID SPRIGGS	LB	6-3	269	Fr	Pflugerville
39	TREY HAMPTON	RB	5-11	221	Fr	Watauga	45	BROCK STRATTON	LB	5-11	228	Jr	San Antonio
6	GRAHAM HARRELL	QB	6-3	197	So	Ennis	40	NATHAN STONE	DB	5-8	165	Fr	Lubbock
23	RYAN HAYES	RB	5-6	161	Fr	Lubbock	79	GARY TAYLOR	OL	6-6	235	Fr	Wolfforth
	RAJON HENLEY	DT	6-3	250	Fr	Galveston	56	KELLEN TILLMAN	LB	6-1	237	Fr	Piano
	LEONARD HEWITT	DB	5-10	175	Fr	Lufkin	13	CHRIS TODD	QB	6-3	201	Sr	Elizabethtown, KY
88	JARRETT HICKS	WR	6-3	208	Sr	Houston	14	KEITH TOOGOOD	K	6-1	179	Sr	Rowlett
7	KELLY HILDEBRANDT	IR	5-9	178	Jr	Lubbock	30	ALEX TRILICA	K	6-0	172	Jr	Friendswood
54	CHAD HILL	LB	5-11	219	Jr	Lubbock	65	LOUIS VASQUEZ	OL	6-6	335	Fr	Corsicana
23	ANTHONY HINES	S	6-1	236	So	Denison	34	LASHAWN VATSON	S	5-9	170	Fr	Irving
25	LONDON HOEFER	WR	6-0	197	Fr	Abilene	16	GRANT WALKER	IR	6-1	187	Jr	Pflugerville
	JONATHAN HOLLINS	DE	6-3	228	Fr	Baton Rouge, LA	4	TODD WALKER	WR	6-1	178	So	Pflugerville
2	CATRON HOUSTON	WR	5-11	183	So	Houston		JAMAR WALL	BD	5-10	180	Jr	Plainview
	JULIUS HOWARD	LB	6-0	220	Fr	Irving	58	CHRIS WALLACE	LB	5-11	201	Fr	Grapevine
93	CHRIS HUDLER	DL	6-3	289	Sr	Mesquite	21	CLARENCE WARD	S	6-0	177	Fr	Pensacola, FL
36	ANTONIO HUFFMAN	CB	5-11	179	Sr	Lovejoy, GA		DANTAY WARD	DT	6-2	191	Fr	Waco
95	RASHAD HUNT	DE	6-2	257	Fr	Lufkin	87	GERRID WARNER	DS	6-7	216	Jr	Oak Harbor, WA
52	VICTOR HUNTER	LB	5-11	251	Fr	Irving	16	LOY WHITE	S	5-8	192	Jr	Georgetown
	ADAM JAMES	TE	6-3	222	Fr	Celina		BRANDON WILLIAMS	DE	6-3	245	Fr	Fort Worth
69	GLENN JANUARY	OL	6-7	287	Sr	Houston	77	JARED WILLIAMS	DE	6-5	252	So	LaMarque
61	ANDREW JOHNSON	OL	6-4	300	Fr	Houston		MARLON WILLIAMS	LB	5-11	209	Fr	Pflugerville
	DANIEL JOHNSON	S	6-3	200	Fr	Houston	48	PAUL WILLIAMS	LB	6-1	221	Jr	Tyler
9	ROBERT JOHNSON	IR	6-1	218	Sr	Americus, GA	67	MARLON WINN	OL	6-6	309	Fr	Waxahachie
73	BRANDON JONES	OL	6-3	309	Sr	Keizer, OR	17	JOSH WITHERSPOON	WR	6-1	208	So	Wolfforth
90	BRIAN JONES	DT	6-1	288	So	Everman	21	SHANNON WOODS	RB	5-11	197	So	McKinney
94	PHILLIP JONES	DE	6-4	239	Fr	Lewisville	89	TYLER YENZER	DE	6-4	235	Jr	Midland

Defensive tackle **Chris Hudler** was particularly dominant in spring practices, and one of the keys to his success was his free-time focus.

Hudler earned his undergraduate degree in exercise and sports science last December and took nine hours of graduate classes in sports management during the spring. The lighter class load allowed him to focus more on football.

Hudler led the Red Raiders in 2005 with five quarterback hurries and three fumble recoveries.

• Texas Tech's football stadium has undergone a name change, becoming **Jones AT&T Stadium**. The name change is a reflection of SBC Communications' 2005 acquisition of AT&T and its decision to keep the AT&T name. The stadium had been called Jones SBC Stadium since 2000.

• For the past 36 years, Texas Tech has played its home games on AstroTurf. This season, the Raiders will play on FieldTurf, a more grass-like synthetic surface that features better cushioning and causes less pounding on players' bones and joints.

• If Tech can score in its first three games this year, the Raiders will break the school record for most consecutive games without being shut out. Tech has scored in 104 consecutive games, dating to October 1997.

• Safeties coach **Carlos Mainord** said the competition to replace last year's starters — **Vincent Meeks** at strong safety and **Dwayne Slay** at free safety — will continue into fall camp.

Junior **Joe Garcia** and sophomore **Anthony Hines** are the top candidates at strong safety, while sophomores **Lance Fuller** and **Darcel McBath** are the leading prospects at free safety. Mainord said that none of those players stood above the rest during the spring.

• Texas Tech isn't counting on big things from a freshman walk-on defensive back. However, **Nathan Stone** might have a bright future. The speedy Stone was a running back at a tiny, Class 2A high school (Roosevelt in Lubbock), but he made a strong impression on coaches during spring drills.

(9-3, 6-2)

Results

W	Florida International	56-3
W	Sam Houston	80-21
W	Indiana State	63-7
W	Kansas	30-17
W	at Nebraska	34-31
W	Kansas State	59-20
L	at Texas	17-52
W	at Baylor	28-0
W	Texas A&M	56-17
L	at Oklahoma State	17-24
W	Oklahoma	23-21
	Cotton Bowl	
L	Alabama	10-13

Individual Stats

PASSING

Name	G	Effic	Att	Cmp	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Long	Yds/G
Hodges	12	147.62	531	353	12	66.5	4197	31	67	349.8
Harrell	6	149.72	55	37	0	67.3	422	3	44	70.3

RUSHING

Name	G	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Av	TD	Long	Yds/G
Henderson	12	148	919	47	872	5.9	17	60	72.7
Hodges	12	109	496	305	191	1.8	3	23	15.9
Woods	12	24	174	6	168	7.0	3	39	14.0

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Long	Yds/G
Johnson	12	67	951	14.2	4	67	79.2
Henderson	12	67	528	7.9	5	39	44.0
Filani	12	65	1007	15.5	8	62	83.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: Slay 114, Session 81, Naziruddin 66
Interceptions: Meeks 3, Naziruddin 2, Brinkley 2, five with 1
Sacks: Saldi 3, Dawson 2.5, four with 2
Tackles for loss: Saldi 8.5, Dixon 6, Session 5



JOEL FILANI

"The (switch) was good for me," said Dawson, who dropped about 10 pounds from last season. "I love pursuing the ball, and (linebacker) is a little easier on my body."

Defensive linemen Seth Nitschmann and Dek Bake both missed 2005 because of season-ending injuries. But they should be mainstays in '06.

Nitschmann, who accounted for 44 tackles, including 4.5 for loss in 2004, is moving to rush end, while the combination of Bake, Chris Hudler, Ken Scott

and Brian Jones likely will form the tackle rotation. Hudler, who had five quarterback hurries last fall, was particularly impressive in the spring, according to defensive tackles coach Ruffin McNeill.

In addition to Dawson, Tech's linebacker corps features another outstanding playmaker in Fletcher Session, who contributed 81 tackles last year. Session finished the year with a flurry, compiling 29 stops in his final three games.

The healthy return of middle linebacker Brock Stratton, who missed most of last year with an injury, solidifies a strong front seven.

The big concerns are in the secondary, where safeties Vincent Meeks and Dwayne Slay (114 tackles, eight forced fumbles) have departed. Athletic cornerback Antonio Huffman returns to the fold, but the Raiders need players like Chris Parker, Joe Garcia, Lance Fuller, Anthony Hines and Darcel McBeth to develop in a hurry.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Texas Tech welcomes back a solid kicking game with punter Alex Reyes and place-kicker Alex Trlica.

Reyes ranked sixth in the Big 12 (42.8 yards per punt), although the Raiders were last in the league in net punting (32.3).

Trlica is steady, converting 13 of 18 field goal attempts last year and all 115 of his career extra-point attempts. Tech also finished second in the Big 12 (behind only Colorado with its high altitude) in terms of the most touchbacks by opponents (40).

The BEST & The BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

WR Jarrett Hicks

It's difficult to single out any receiver in Tech's spread-the-wealth passing attack. But it's also impossible to overlook Hicks' value to this team. In addition to catching 65 passes last year, Hicks already owns the school's career touchdown receptions record with 28. ... Hicks ranks second nationally among current players with 2,525 career receiving yards. ... He holds Tech's single-season touchdown receptions record with 13 in 2004. ... Hicks hauled in the game-tying touchdown in the closing minutes of the Cotton Bowl last January against Alabama. ... He's already a two-time first-team All-Big 12 honoree.



EMERGING STAR

LB Keyunta Dawson

Yes, we know that Dawson is already an established star, but he still gets the nod here because he's at a new position, switching from defensive end to outside linebacker. ... Dawson dropped 10 pounds since last season to improve his agility and speed. ... He ranks in Tech's career top 10 with 13.5 career sacks. ... Dawson had two sacks in the 2004 Holiday Bowl and four tackles and a pass breakup in the 2006 Cotton Bowl.



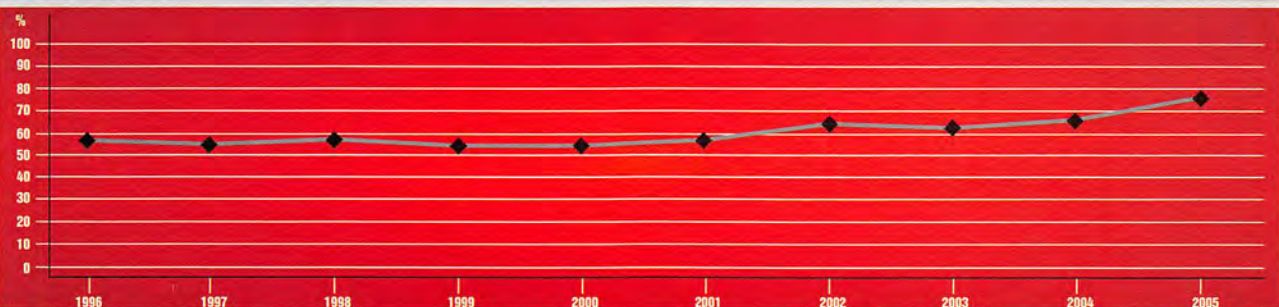
TOP NEWCOMER

OL Marlon Winn

The offensive line appears to be solid, but redshirt freshman Marlon Winn could figure prominently into Tech's immediate plans because he can play either tackle position. ... The 6-6, 309-pound Winn has an impressive reach and tremendous athleticism. ... He has been timed at under 5.0 seconds in the 40-yard dash, which was one of the primary reasons he was rated as one of the top 10 offensive line prep prospects in the state of Texas in the 2005 recruiting class.



Texas Tech's Winning Trend 1996-2005



PLAYER PROFILE

DANNY AMENDOLA



Photo by James D. Smith/Icon SM

Healthy Now; Will Big Plays Return?

Texas Tech receiver Danny Amendola doesn't mind the comparisons. In fact, he's quite pleased to be mentioned in the same breath as Wes Welker, who left Lubbock in 2003 as the most productive punt returner in college football history.

But in all sincerity, Amendola says he doesn't deserve the comparison. At least not yet.

"It's an honor to be compared to him, especially since I've met him and seen that he's a really good guy," Amendola said of Welker, who has

played two seasons with the Miami Dolphins.

"I've watched film and studied (Welker's) game. He's a great football player, and he has such a knack for making plays. My goal is to be as good as Wes, but I'm not there yet."

He might be back on Welker's fast track this year, though.

In 2005, Amendola's return numbers dipped to 9.8 yards per punt return (seventh in the Big 12) and just 15.7 yards per kickoff return. Those were disappointing numbers for someone who burst onto the scene so prominently.

In 2004, Amendola was a first-team All-Big 12 return specialist whose freshman numbers were better (12.8 per punt return) than Welker's or any other Tech freshman since 1985. He thrilled fans with a 90-yard punt return against Kansas State and sparked a comeback win against TCU with a 52-yard return.

But Amendola did not look like himself last year as he played with pain in both knees throughout the Big 12 season. He still managed to return 32 punts and catch 34 passes, but he was not the same kind of explosive threat that reminded so many fans of Welker.

This spring was a different story, though.

"He came on in the spring," Tech inside receivers coach Dana Holgorsen said. "He's healthy; he's stronger and faster than he was last year, and he'll give you his best on every play. He's back in top form."

Indeed, the 5-10 speedster could be back in the Welker mode, both as a returner and a receiver.

"Danny and Wes remind me of each other because they're both short, high intensity guys," head coach Mike Leach said. "He was nicked up a lot last year, and he was a step slower. But as far as reliability, he's real dependable back there like Wes was. And now he's healthy again."

So, let the comparisons to Welker resume in full force.

The elusive Danny Amendola is one of the most dangerous punt return specialists in the league, but Tech needs a boost in its kickoff returns after finishing 98th nationally last year.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The Raiders' BCS dreams will hinge on their ability to maneuver a road full of potential pitfalls.

After opening the season at home against SMU, Tech hits the road to face a pair of 2005 bowl participants in UTEP and TCU. The conference road trips — at Texas A&M, Colorado, Iowa State and Oklahoma — are certainly dangerous. Since Mike Leach became the head coach in 2000, Tech is 1-7 against those four foes on the road.

The big game circled on Tech's calendar is the Oct. 28 home date against defending national champion Texas. The Raiders have split the past four meetings against the Longhorns in Lubbock. But it will take plenty of work to ensure that the showdown against Texas is for more than just bragging rights.

— Rusty Burson

SCHEDULE

Sept. 2	SMU
Sept. 9	at UTEP
Sept. 16	at TCU
Sept. 23	SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Sept. 30	at Texas A&M
Oct. 7	MISSOURI
Oct. 14	at Colorado
Oct. 21	at Iowa State
Oct. 28	TEXAS
Nov. 4	BAYLOR
Nov. 11	at Oklahoma
Nov. 18	OKLAHOMA STATE



AIR FORCE

FALCONS

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AT A GLANCE

2005

4-7 overall, 3-5 MWC (7th)

COACH

Fisher DeBerry — At Air Force and overall: 165-101-1, 22 years

RETURNING STARTERS

12; 7 offense, 5 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Shaun Carney, FB Jacobe Kendrick, DE Gilberto Perez, CB/PR Chris Sutton, LB Drew Fowler

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Although the option offense long ago lost its novelty in the Mountain West, it still causes preparation headaches. Shaun Carney has given the Falcons a passing dimension. The defensive front looks for improvement with four down linemen, not three.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

AFA typically starts strong but wears out by late October with the demands of academy life. The Falcons finish with 11 straight weeks without a bye. From Oct. 28 to Nov. 18, Air Force must play BYU, rival Army, Notre Dame and Utah.

KEY LOSSES

WR Jason Brown, C Jon Wilson, DB Denny Poland, P Donny Heaton

OVERVIEW

Shaun Carney has the talent to get the offense back on track, and vast improvement is possible if the team gets more consistent play from the halfbacks. Air Force won't be a factor in the conference race, but if the Falcons can avenge three consecutive losses to Navy, it will be a successful season.

Simple Goals: Get Back on Top in Rushing, Beat Navy OFFENSE

Air Force coach Fisher DeBerry's standing joke at preseason luncheons was a vow to pass the ball out of the option. He wouldn't announce when, saying he wanted to keep fans coming back for the suspense.

Now that Air Force actually has a decent passer in junior Shaun Carney, DeBerry spent the spring trying to get back his quarterback into more of a running mode.

The quarterback-fullback exchange is where the option all starts, and it hasn't been starting very well of late. That's one of the reasons why Air Force — as unthinkable as it might have been several years ago — has become a basketball school.

The Falcons have been to the NCAA Tournament in two of the past three years, a span in which the football team hasn't been to a bowl. Even more unthinkable in DeBerry's dynasty is ceding the Commander-in-Chief's trophy to Navy three years running.

Last season's production of 246 rushing yards per game was the lowest for the academy since 1992, and AFA slipped out of the top five in NCAA rushing (eighth) for the first time since 1997.

Good news is there is plenty of room to run behind a veteran line led by senior tackle Robert Kraay. If fullback Jacobe Kendrick can stay healthy, he's capable of approaching a 1,000-yard season. The halfbacks aren't proven, and backup safety Ty Paffett was moved over to help.

Carney, a part-time starter since his freshman year, is already fourth among quarterbacks at Air Force during the option era with 2,708 passing yards. He was also AFA's top rusher last season,

averaging 64.5 yards per game.

The tight end position was so underutilized in the passing game that "celebrity" media coaches made a point of throwing to the tight end to start the spring game.

DEFENSE

A few years ago when New Mexico's 3-3-5 defense was all the rage in the Mountain West, Air Force copied the scheme with some success.

This fall, however, the Falcons are steering the defense to a four-man line to take advantage of personnel.

DeBerry insists that senior end Gilberto Perez is as good as any defensive lineman in the league. Seniors Grant Thomas and Kevin Quinn man the interior positions, while the only relative newcomer is junior Josh Clayton at end.

Junior linebacker Drew Fowler could contend for all-league honors.

The five-man secondary scheme remains unchanged. The top players are senior Chris Sutton, one of the league's better cover cornerbacks, and free safety Bobby Giannini.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Air Force has established a reputation as having one of the nation's most dangerous special teams in terms of blocking kicks. However, punt protection failed miserably for the Falcons last fall, and that is a priority this season.

The kicking and punting jobs are open. Sophomore Ryan Harrison, primarily a place-kicker, has a chance to handle both chores.

— Natalie Meisler



BYU

COUGARS

BYU COUGARS BYU COUGARS BYU COUGARS BYU COUGARS BYU COUGARS

AT A GLANCE

2005

6-6 overall, 5-3 MWC (T-2nd)

COACH

Bronco Mendenhall — At BYU and overall:
6-6, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS

14; 8 offense, 4 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB John Beck, RB Curtis Brown, OT Jake Kuresa, TE Jonny Harline, LB Cameron Jensen

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

BYU should excel in every aspect of the offense, except for a deep receiving threat. The kicking game is solid. The improvement of last season has the Cougars once again believing they can win and challenge for the league title.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The defense is in rebuilding mode with only a handful of regulars returning. It will be a learning experience. The early non-conference schedule is difficult — at Arizona, home vs. Tulsa and at Boston College.

KEY LOSSES

WR Todd Watkins, OL Lance Reynolds, DL Manaia Brown, S Spencer White

OVERVIEW

Mendenhall's coaching debut was a solid success as BYU made its first postseason appearance since 2001, losing to Cal in the Las Vegas Bowl. This season, the Cougars are clearly in the top three of the league, albeit behind Utah and TCU. The key is keeping quarterback John Beck healthy and continuing to progress on the defensive side.

Beck Has the Stats — But Not the Rings — of Cougars Past

Bronco Mendenhall is proof of the coaching axiom that you never want to be the guy to directly succeed a legend.

Had Mendenhall directly succeeded icon LaVell Edwards with a 1-3 start, the 39-year-old (who looks youthful enough to be Edwards' grandson), might not have lasted for a 5-3 finish.

The Cougars recovered for second place in the Mountain West and the school's first bowl appearance since 2001. Not bad, considering not much was really expected for a program that had been in rebuilding mode since 2002.

Mendenhall did a remarkable job correcting the course after the miserable start, including a controversial overtime loss to TCU. By reaching a bowl, he knows expectations are only elevated for the next go-round.

"At BYU that means a conference championship and a major bowl game year in and year out," he said.

For that to happen, the first order of business is the last game of the year. BYU has dropped four straight to sworn enemy Utah.

OFFENSE

With a defense that is still lacking in experience in several areas, the Cougars will be in outscoring-everyone mode.

That could very well happen because BYU has the MWC's top quarterback in senior John Beck, the makings of the best ground attack since 2001 and several veterans on the offensive line.

Beck has 7,136 career passing yards and, with any kind of season, will finish

his career second in passing yardage in BYU history behind Heisman winner Ty Detmer (1988-91). But, for Beck to fully join the BYU quarterback dynasty, he'll have to lead the Cougars a bit further.

"He has poise and experience, the things that jump out at you," Mendenhall said.

"Until a conference championship is earned and meeting the expectations we have for the program, you can't compare him to those other quarterbacks."

Beck, for the first time in his career, went into the spring without having to prove himself as the starter. He saw spot duty in an injury-plagued freshman campaign, then started 10 games as a sophomore.

His junior total of 3,709 yards eclipsed his yardage of his first two seasons combined. He completed 65 percent of his passes last season, with 27 touchdowns and 13 interceptions.

Beck won't have a legitimate deep threat now that wide receiver Todd Watkins is gone. The leading returning pass-catcher is tight end Jonny Harline, who is more of an oversized receiver at 6-3, 226, than a prototype tight end. Whatever he is, he is prolific, having caught 63 passes for 853 yards and five touchdowns last season.

Curtis Brown, a first-team All-MWC pick with 1,123 yards rushing and another 454 receiving, is back for his senior year. He won't have to do it all himself. The biggest surprise on offense during the spring was sophomore backup Fui Vakapuna, a 6-1, 225 powerhouse com-



JOHN BECK

Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 152.3 ypg rushing (5th in MWC/51st NCAA), 310.1 passing (1st/6th), 462.4 total offense (2nd/13th), 33.9 ppg (2nd/24th)

POS	STARTER	YR	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	John Beck*	Sr.	He's a top five QB draft prospect for 2007.	Jason Beck, Sr.
RB	Curtis Brown*	Sr.	First-team All-MWC last year; 2,211 career yards.	Fui Vakapuna, So.
WR	Michael Reed	So.	Part-time starter caught 21 passes for 272 yards.	Bryce Mahuika, So.
WR	Nate Meikle*	Sr.	Junior college transfer made instant impact. Returns punts.	Saia Hafoka, So.
WR	Matt Allen*	Jr.	Caught game winner vs. New Mexico.	Zac Collie, Sr.
TE	Jonny Harline*	Sr.	An outstanding pass catcher and NFL prospect.	Daniel Coats, Sr.
LT	Eddie Keele*	Sr.	One of the top returnees on the line.	David Oswald, So.
LG	Dallas Reynolds*	So.	Earned some Freshman All-American notice.	Sete Aulai, Jr.
C	Jeff Rhea	Jr.	Biggest hole to fill on OL.	Sete Aulai, Jr.
RG	Ray Feinga	So.	Moves into bigger role.	Travis Bright, So.
RT	Jake Kuresa*	Sr.	Likely candidate for Outland Trophy.	Nick Longshore, Sr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 147.8 ypg rushing (3rd in MWC/57th NCAA), 269.3 passing (9th/104th), 417.1 total defense (7th/91st), 29.2 ppg (5th/83rd)

POS	STARTER	YR	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Kyle Luekenga	So.	Saw limited action during freshman season.	Brett Denney, Fr.
NT	Hala Paongo*	Sr.	First-time starter as a senior.	Russell Tialavea, Fr.
DE	Jan Jorgensen	Fr.	High school QB/LB is coming off redshirt year.	Judd Anderton, Jr.
LB	Bryan Kehl	Jr.	One of the standouts in spring ball.	Dustin Gabriel, Jr.
LB	Cameron Jensen*	Sr.	Anchor of defense was second-team all-league.	Terrance Hooks, Fr.
LB	Markell Staffieri	Jr.	Part-time starter assumes bigger role.	Kelly Poppinga, Jr.
LB	Chris Bolden	Jr.	Junior college transfer redshirted last season.	David Nixon, So.
CB	Justin Robinson*	Sr.	Team Defensive Rookie of the Year; return specialist.	Brandon Howard, Fr.
CB	Kayle Buchanan*	Jr.	Part-time starter had nine tackles vs. Notre Dame.	Nate Hutchinson, Fr.
SS	Cole Miyahira	Sr.	Played extensively in 2005 as a backup.	Aaron Gordon, Sr.
FS	David Tafuna	Jr.	Ready to step up into a significant role.	Quinn Gooch, Jr.

*Returning starter

ing off a church mission.

With three starters back on the line, led by standout Jake Kuresa, the Cougars are in good shape up front.

It took a while last season for the Cougars to grasp the offense that coordinator Robert Anae imported from Texas Tech, but once they got going, there was no stopping them.

DEFENSE

Mendenhall brought in New Mexico's standard 3-3-5 scheme when he left the Lobos for his hometown of Provo in 2003. As with much of the league, the 3-3-5 will be scrapped this season to adjust for the ability at linebacker.

Second-team All-MWC pick Cameron Jensen leads the linebacking

unit that will usually place four on the field. Jensen, who had 84 tackles last season, will run the show from the middle.

A newcomer to watch is Utah State transfer Kelly Poppinga, brother of former Cougars standout Brady Poppinga, who was with the Green Bay Packers last season.

Junior Bryan Kehl, who had a lengthy adjustment coming off his mission last season, enjoyed a breakout spring to press for a starting job.

The biggest task defensively is restocking the line, which loses its four most experienced players.

The Cougars have returned to the standard four-man secondary, and Justin Robinson and Kayle Buchanan bring starting experience at the corner.

"I think the defense will have to develop," Mendenhall said. "I feel confident we are on track but there are question marks."

SPECIAL TEAMS

The kicker and punter are both unrelated seniors named McLaughlin.

Punter Derek McLaughlin is a Washington transfer who averaged 40.0 yards as a junior. In his first year as the place-kicker, Jared McLaughlin converted 14 of 19 field goal attempts and kicked a 39-yarder to force overtime against TCU.

The return game was spotty and Mendenhall said special teams improvement was a priority in the spring.

— Natalie Meisler



RAMS

COLORADO STATE RAMS COLORADO STATE RAMS COLORADO STATE RAMS

AT A GLANCE

2005

6-6 overall, 5-3 MWC (T-2nd)

COACH

Sonny Lubick — At CSU and overall:
101-57 13 years

RETURNING STARTERS

14; 6 offense, 6 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB Kyle Bell, H-Back Kory Sperry,
WR Johnny Walker, WR Damon Morton,
CB Robert Herbert, S Ben Stratton

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

The offense returns to a run-oriented quarterback system, and the combination of a deep receiving corps and power running game will keep defenses honest. CSU has defensive experience at every position. Solid kicking game.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Defense can't help but be better against the run, but extensive improvement is needed. There will be some playing-time battles along the offensive line and in the secondary in the fall. In addition to rivalry game vs. Colorado in Denver, non-conference schedule includes games at Nevada and Fresno State, two of the WAC's finest.

KEY LOSSES

QB Justin Holland, WR David Anderson,
OT Mike Brisiel, S Travis Garcia

OVERVIEW

The program's chief asset remains Lubick, who is one of eight active Division I-A coaches with 100 victories at his current school. These aren't the days of dominating the Mountain West — the team needs to regain its power in the running game on both sides — but the Rams are good enough to be in the bowl mix for the second consecutive season.

Not Dominating, but Back in the Hunt for Title

Take away the first two games and two of the last three ... and 2005 was a successful season for Colorado State.

Well, of course, you can't do that, but in the middle of all that the Rams rebounded from a rare losing slate in 2004 to return to bowl eligibility, only to be beaten by Navy 51-30 in the Poinsettia Bowl and finish 6-6.

The dominant team in three of the Mountain West's first four seasons, Colorado State has seen the program erode on defense as Utah and league newcomer TCU combined for conference titles in the past three years.

The Rams, while not as strong on paper as Utah, TCU and BYU, still look to be up in the first division. The offense returns to a run-oriented quarterback system, and the defense has some experience at every position.

There will be only a few battles on the offensive line and secondary to settle in the fall.

With a wealth of experience on the roster and an unchanged coaching staff, coach Sonny Lubick said, "I think we're going to be OK."

OFFENSE

It wasn't much fun for the Rams at the time, but now Colorado State is delighted junior quarterback Caleb Hanie started half of the 2004 season as a true freshman after starter Justin Holland broke his ankle.

"I never want to have to play a freshman kid again," said offensive coordina-

tor Dan Hammerschmidt. "But now I'm glad he played."

At 6-2 and 236 pounds, Hanie enjoys running the ball, and the playbook has been modified to fit his skills. He saw occasional time off the bench last season, when Holland returned to throw for 3,185 yards.

Not quite the passer that Holland was, Hanie has worked on his form and his spring passes had more zip.

Although the Rams lost the most productive receiver in school history in David Anderson, four wideouts return with a combined 94 catches for 1,468 yards and 10 touchdowns. Either top returnee Johnny Walker or spring standout Damon Morton could become Anderson's heir as the go-to receiver.

Add in H-back/tight end Kory Sperry (547 yards and four TDs), and Hanie has no lack of outlets. Sperry, a lanky high-school wide receiver, has grown to 6-6, 260 pounds, an every-down player with a bright NFL future.

The ground game received a much-needed makeover last season as Kyle Bell emerged in the former CSU mold of a punishing power back. Although he didn't start until the third game, Bell finished with 1,288 yards and 10 TDs, ranking 22nd in the country in yards per game.

The offensive line lost three mainstays, but looms as another strength. Clint Oldenburg, a former tight end, moves from right to left tackle to



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 121.7 ypg rushing (7th in MWC/89th NCAA), 288.3 passing (3rd/16th), 408.0 total offense (4th/38th), 26.8 ppg (7th/58th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Caleb Hanie	Jr.	Running threat started five games in 2004.	Billy Farris, So.
RB	Kyle Bell*	Jr.	With bruising style, gained 1,288 yards last year.	Gartrell Johnson, So.
WR	Johnny Walker	Jr.	Rams best deep threat; 43 catches last season.	George Hill, Jr.
WR	Damon Morton	Jr.	Was the team's best receiver in spring ball.	Dustin Osborn, Sr.*
HB	Kory Sperry*	Jr.	At 6-6, 260 pounds, catches and runs over defenders.	Kevin McPeck, So.
TE	Chris Kawulok	So.	Looking for bigger role.	Tyler Jorgensen, Fr.
LT	Clint Oldenburg*	Sr.	Converted from right tackle to anchor line.	Cole Pemberton, Fr.
LG	Jerome Williams	Sr.	Daniel Crews, Adrian Martinez also contend.	Daniel Crews, So.
C	Nick Allotta*	Jr.	Part-time starter could also play OG.	Tim Walter, Fr.
RG	Josh Day*	Sr.	Two-year starter contends for postseason honors.	James Morehead, Fr.
RT	Dane Stratton	So.	"Little brother" of CSU safety Ben Stratton.	Scott Benedict, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 222.8 ypg rushing (9th in MWC/115th NCAA), 206.0 passing (1st/39th), 428.8 total defense (9th/99th), 30.8 ppg (7th/91st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Jesse Nading*	Jr.	Rams' top pass rusher had four sacks last season.	Tommie Hill, So.
NT	Blake Smith*	So.	Developing into a standout in the middle.	Matt Rupp, So.
DT	Erik Sandie*	Jr.	Has blocked three extra-point attempts.	Shawn McGoveran, So.
DE	Bob Vomhof	Jr.	Undecided spring battle with Wade Landers.	Wade Landers, So.
LB	Jon Radford	Sr.	Most active player among the linebackers.	Nathan Pauly, Jr.
LB	Jeff Horinek*	So.	Moved from outside; made 61 tackles in 2005.	Jake Pottorff, Fr.
LB	Luke Adkins	Sr.	Was a starter in 2004 before ACL tear.	John Nichols, Jr.
CB	Robert Herbert*	Sr.	Outstanding cover corner, top returning tackler (72).	Joey Rucks, Jr.
CB	Darryl Williams*	Jr.	Only 5-9, 180, and coming off shoulder surgery.	Brandon Cathy, Sr.
SS	Ben Stratton	Sr.	Big hitter returns after missing '05 with ACL injury.	Mike Pagnotta, So.
FS	Klint Kubiak	So.	Son of Houston Texans coach, Gary Kubiak.	Jake Galusha, So.

*Returning starter

anchor the line. A solid class of redshirt freshmen battle for right tackle and left guard.

DEFENSE

Coaches and players grew weary with reminders of how the Rams ranked third from last nationally in rushing defense, yielding 222.8 yards a game on the ground.

True, the Rams led the Mountain West in pass defense, but few teams were forced to go to the air.

"Everyone asks the question if we want to be a little better on defense. We have to be," said Lubick. Therefore, fundamentals were re-emphasized in the spring.

The only statistic Lubick has ever valued is turnover margin. When the Rams

ranked 110th nationally in 2004 with only 15 takeaways, turnovers took a priority for the defense in 2005. The result was 27 takeaways, good for 35th in the country.

"You get what you emphasize," said defensive coordinator Steve Stanard.

The linebackers were distributed into different positions in the spring. The defensive line now has veterans at every spot with a three-man rotation at tackle and the return of junior defensive end Jesse Nading.

The secondary had some personnel questions in the spring with three potential starters — safety Ben Stratton (knee), and cornerbacks Robert Herbert (leg stress fracture) and Darryl Williams (shoulder) — sitting out as a precaution.

If Stratton returns to his three-year form, he'll be one of the most hard-hitting safeties in the league. He tore his ACL in camp last August and the Rams were thin at the position all season. Herbert gives CSU a superb cover corner if his leg fully heals.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The kicking game ranks as a strength for the Rams.

Jimmie Kaylor, who was first-team All-Mountain West Conference punter last season, returns after averaging 45.3 yards per kick. The best midseason move last year was elevating walk-on kicker Jason Smith, who hit nine of 10 field goal attempts and every extra point attempt.

— Natalie Meisler

TCU HORNEDED FROGS

TCU HORNEDED FROGS TCU HORNEDED FROGS TCU HORNEDED FROGS TCU HORNEDED

AT A GLANCE

2005

11-1 overall, 8-0 Mountain West (1st)

COACH

Gary Patterson at TCU and overall:
43-18, 5 years

RETURNING STARTERS

16; 8 offense, 6 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Jeff Ballard, RB Robert Merrill,
RB Aaron Brown, RB Lonta Hobbs,
OT Herbert Taylor, DE Tommy Blake,
DE Chase Ortiz, SS Marvin White

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

The Horned Frogs are strong on both sides of the ball, and Patterson played 41 true or redshirt freshmen last year, which bodes well for TCU's future. The aggressive defense forced 40 turnovers, best in the nation last season.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

TCU lost three starters off its offensive line, which helped the Frogs post record-setting numbers last year. There's a logjam at running back, which is good thing, but it will be interesting to see how the carries are distributed.

KEY LOSSES

OT Michael Toudouze, CB Quincy Butler,
DT Ranorris Ray

OVERVIEW

This is a well-coached and disciplined team that is coming off an 11-1 season and has a legitimate chance to break into a BCS bowl. The Frogs, in their second year in the MWC, might be better scouted this time around, but it shouldn't stop them from at least posting the fourth 10-win season in Patterson's six years.

Encore Performance Could Be Something Special

In 2005, TCU finished 11-1, won the Mountain West Conference title and finished ranked No. 9. It was their first outright conference title in 47 years and their first unbeaten conference season since 1938.

It was also the Horned Frogs' second 11-win season in the past three years, both of which came under head coach Gary Patterson.

They did it last season with excellence on both sides of the ball, as the Frogs had the highest-scoring offense in the Mountain West and the top defense in the league.

Most of that outstanding cast returns, but what can TCU do for an encore?

Well ... they could go undefeated for the first time since 1938, when the Horned Frogs also won their last national title.

Getting there won't be easy. The non-conference schedule features improving Baylor and Top 25 Texas Tech, and the conference season opens with BYU and at Utah. That game in Salt Lake City appears to be the centerpiece of the Mountain West season.

Surviving the early part of the schedule would put TCU in great position to get some serious BCS consideration.

OFFENSE

Last year's balanced offense set a school record for touchdowns and also scored the second most points in school history.

As good as that unit was, averaging nearly 34 points per game en route to the

Mountain West title, this year's edition could be better.

The Frogs return eight starters, including many skill position players. QB Jeff Ballard was 8-0 as the starter last season after replacing the injured Tye Gunn, and remains the starter. He's tough and can do a little bit of everything — he passed for more than 275 yards in three games and rushed for eight touchdowns, four against New Mexico.

Joining him in the backfield will be MWC Freshman of the Year Aaron Brown and leading rusher Robert Merrill. Also back is Lonta Hobbs, who began last year as the starter before being injured in week two. Merrill and Hobbs are former 1,000-yard backs.

William Jackson, one of the unsung heroes on offense, returns at fullback and does a great job clearing a path for the great stable of runners.

At wide receiver, two of the three starters return — Michael DePriest and second-leading pass catcher Quentily Harmon. They are joined by Marcus Brock, back from injury to claim a starting spot. Ervin Dickerson, Donald Massey and Derek Moore are also in the mix.

At tight end, returnee Chad Andrus and Brent Hecht will see most of the action.

If there is a question about the TCU offense, it is the line, where three starters must be replaced. But heading up the list of returning players is Herbert Taylor, a first-team All-MWC performer last season who starts 2006 on the Lombardi Award watch list.



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 192.2 ypg rushing (3rd in MWC/28th NCAA), 207.8 passing (7th/77th), 399.9 total offense (5th/41st), 33.2 ppg (1st/22nd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jeff Ballard*	Sr.	Went a perfect 8-0 as a starter in 2005.	Chad Huffman, Jr.
RB	Robert Merrill*	Sr.	FB William Jackson also starts in two-RB sets.	A. Brown, So./L. Hobbs, Sr.
WR	Marcus Brock	Jr.	Back from injury to claim starting spot in the spring.	Derek Moore, Jr.
WR	Michael DePriest*	Sr.	Has reputation as a go-to, clutch receiver.	Ervin Dickerson, Jr.
WR	Quentilly Harmon*	Sr.	Was Frogs' second-leading pass catcher in 2005.	Donald Massey, Jr.
TE	Chad Andrus*	Sr.	Started eight games at this spot a year ago.	Brent Hecht, Sr.
LT	Maurice Bouldwin*	Sr.	Has made the transition from D-line look easy.	Wade Sisk, Jr.
LG	Giles Montgomery	So.	Great fill-in who got first career start in bowl game.	Preston Phillips, So.
C	Blake Schlueter	So.	Played in all 12 games as a true freshman in 2005.	Tyler Marrou, Fr.
RG	Matty Lindner	Jr.	Athletic guard saw time in 10 games last season.	Josh Karlin, Fr.
RT	Herbert Taylor*	Sr.	Lone returning starter on offensive line is a rock.	Heath Raetz, So.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 107.9 ypg rushing (1st in MWC/16th NCAA), 221.2 passing (4th/63rd), 329.1 total defense (1st/25th), 18.6 ppg (1st/15th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Chase Ortiz*	Jr.	Started '05 on third team and is now all-conference.	Jared Retkofsky, Sr.
DT	Cody Moore	So.	Former three sport star in HS played in 10 games in '05.	James Vess, So.
NT	Jarrarcea Williams	Sr.	Converted FB was solid as a reserve in 11 games.	Lorenzo Jones, So.
DE	Tommy Blake*	Jr.	First-team All-MWC performer had seven sacks.	Jamison Newby, Sr.
LB	David Hawthorne*	Jr.	Great speed and instincts saw him start 10 games in '05.	Robert Henson, So.
LB	Jason Phillips*	So.	Was second-team All-MWC as a freshman in 2005.	Ryan Schlenger, Sr.
CB	Mike Salvage	Sr.	Played in all 12 games last season.	Nick Sanders, Fr.
CB	Vernon Russell	Sr.	Fought through injuries to play in final nine games.	Corderra Hunter, Fr.
WS	Marvin White*	Sr.	Was second-team All-MWC in his first year with Frogs.	Brian Bonner, Jr.
SS	Eric Buchanan*	Sr.	Former corner started last five games of season.	Brian Bonner, Jr.
FS	David Roach	Jr.	Smart player has reclaimed starting spot in secondary.	Steven Coleman, So.

*Returning starter

Last year, one of many things the offense did well was take care of the ball, losing just eight fumbles. Expect more of the same in 2006.

DEFENSE

With defense being Patterson's forte, it is no surprise that the 2005 Frogs were the top defensive unit in the Mountain West, leading four defensive categories.

On a positive note, six starters return. On a negative note, four of the departed were either first or second-team All-MWC honorees. But with TCU's depth, plenty of candidates exist.

At linebacker, David Hawthorne and Jason Phillips return while Robert Henson should also see considerable playing time.

As for the line, virtually the entire

unit, save for first-team All-MWC defensive tackle Ranorris Ray, is back. This group is led by two all-conference performers at defensive end, juniors Tommy Blake and Chase Ortiz.

Cody Moore is set to step in at tackle after playing 10 games last year, backed up by fellow sophomore James Vess. Converted fullback Jarrarcea Williams will replace Ray at the other tackle spot after a solid 2005 in which he played 11 games. Sophomore Lorenzo Jones is his backup.

In the secondary, two starters return — strong safety Eric Buchanan and weak safety Marvin White. David Roach, who started for part of 2005, is again the starter at free safety, where he will be backed up by Steven Coleman.

At cornerback, the Frogs will have

a pair of new starters in seniors Mike Salvage, who played in all 12 games last season and Vernon Russell, who rebounded from early injuries to play in the final nine games. Freshmen Corderra Hunter and Nick Sanders should also defend their share of passes.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Punter Brian Cortney and kicker Chris Manfredini, who was perfect on field goal attempts last year (13 of 13), are back.

Peter LoCoco will handle kickoff duties and also be the team's long-distance place-kicker. Michael DePriest and Donald Massey will split kickoff return responsibilities while Marcus Brock will handle punts.

— Steve Hunt



UTES

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AT A GLANCE

2005

7-5 overall, 4-4 MWC (T-4th)

COACH

Kyle Whittingham — At Utah and overall: 7-5, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS

15; 6 offense, 8 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

WR Brent Casteel, WR Brian Hernandez, DT Kelly Talavou, DB Eric Weddle, DB Casey Evans

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Utah has an experienced defense and one of the top secondaries in the country, led by Eric Weddle. The interior of the defensive line might be the best in the conference. The three-deep QB roster is sure to produce a standout. The winning tradition is well established.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The running game goes into the fall somewhat unsettled, although the offense is diverse enough to cover for any weakness until the problem gets solved. Will the QB situation become disruptive?

KEY LOSSES

RB Quinton Ganther, WR Travis LaTendresse, OL Jesse Boone, DL Steve Fifta, LB Spencer Toone

OVERVIEW

The defense has potential to dominate and some combination of the quarterbacks will make the offense go. An opener at UCLA could be telling. After a step back last season, Utah is ready to make another BCS run ... or at least reclaim the conference crown from TCU. The teams meet in Salt Lake City on Oct. 5.

With QBs Galore, Utes Eye a BCS Game

No one expected Utah to reprise its 2004 BCS breakthrough season in 2005 after losing five draft picks (including the No. 1 overall selection) and most of the coaching staff.

A first-year head coach, and an 18-year-old true sophomore quarterback, didn't boost the Utes' stock, either.

But after Utah saw how the rest of the Mountain West lived — enduring a three-game midyear losing streak — the Utes improved rapidly down the stretch. Utah played its best in the last two games when back-up quarterback Brett Ratliff was forced to step up as the starter.

The Utes beat arch-rival BYU to earn a bowl bid and then dismantled Georgia Tech 38-11 in the Emerald Bowl.

With three QBs who can start anywhere, the makings of the best defense in years and a solid non-league schedule, the Utes could return to the BCS mix this fall, especially because of the addition of a fifth BCS game.

"Our goal each and every year is to win the Mountain West championship," said coach Kyle Whittingham. "The bar has been set very high here and we intend to keep it going."

OFFENSE

It will be a three-man race in the fall at quarterback, and here's a trivia point on Utah QB derbies: The last time the Utes had a close three-man race coming out of the spring, the No. 3 quarterback was Alex Smith.

Utah's current No. 3 quarterback is

Oklahoma transfer Tom Grady. He backed up Jason White in 2004, then transferred to find more playing time.

"He has a big arm and can throw a country mile," Whittingham said. "He has all the physical attributes."

Then there is Brett Ratliff, the junior college transfer called upon for the biggest game of the year (BYU) when starter Brian Johnson tore his ACL. His two-game totals as a starter were 621 yards passing and eight touchdowns.

"He has that field general persona, the intangibles of leadership the way he makes everyone around him better," said Whittingham.

And don't forget about Johnson, who passed for 2,982 yards and rushed for 478 more in his 10 games. His 337-yard average ranked fourth nationally in total offense.

Johnson recovered from surgery in time for some very limited work in the spring. Whittingham said nothing will be decided until fall camp. A redshirt year is possible for Johnson if any setbacks occur.

"We're not going into the fall with the idea of redshirting," Whittingham said. "He's going in with the idea he's keeping his starting job."

Utah has question marks in the running game. USC transfer Darryl Poston, hindered by injuries and a kidney problem throughout his two-school career, had a breakout spring. The former prep All-American was granted an extra year of eligibility in the offseason.



ERIC WEDDLE

Darrell Mack was the top backup to Quinton Ganther last season, rushing for 147 yards on 39 carries. Help from the recruiting class arrives in the fall, so this competition will continue.

No matter how many wide receivers Utah loses every year, the program restocks quickly. Senior Brian Hernandez and sophomore Brent Casteel lead the four-wideout contingent.

The offensive line carries over starters at both tackles and part-time starters at both guards.

DEFENSE

No Mountain West player — offense or defense — carries a more impressive three-year resume than Eric Weddle, the returning MWC Defensive Player

Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 178.5 ypg rushing (4th in MWC/32nd NCAA), 284.5 passing (2nd/12th), 473.0 total offense (1st/12th), 30.0 ppg (4th/36th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Brett Ratliff	Sr.	2-0 as starter, but healthy Johnson could reclaim job.	Brian Johnson, Jr.*
RB	Darryl Poston	Sr.	Off-injured USC transfer could finally have breakthrough.	Darrell Mack, So.
WR	Derrek Richards*	Jr.	Started final six games last season; has 4.4 speed.	Freddie Brown, So.
WR	Brian Hernandez*	Sr.	Reminds some of ex-Utah receiver Steve Smith.	Fano Tagovailoa, Sr.
WR	Brent Casteel	So.	Enjoyed impact freshman year with 39 catches.	Sean Smith, Fr.
WR	Marquis Wilson	So.	He's a threat to run on reverses.	Bradon Godfrey, So.
LT	Tavo Tupola*	Sr.	Earned second-team All-MWC honors last year.	Terrence Apted, Sr.
LG	Eric Pettit	Sr.	Was a part-time starter at right guard.	Zane Beadles, Fr.
C	Kyle Gunter	Jr.	Only inexperienced player on offensive line.	Jeremy Infrerra, Jr.
RG	Robert Conley*	So.	Won a starting job as a freshman.	Corey Seuli, So.
RT	Jason Boone*	Jr.	Led line in total plays last season.	Dustin Hensel, So.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 150.2 ypg rushing (4th in MWC/61st NCAA), 223.7 passing (5th/67th), 373.8 total defense (2nd/59th), 24.1 ppg (2nd/50th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Martail Burnett*	Jr.	Made 53 tackles when forced into starting role in '05.	Alex Puccinelli, Jr.
DT	Kelly Talavou*	Sr.	Slides over to replace All-MWC Steve Fifita.	Bryce Scanlon, So.
NT	Paul Soliai	Sr.	Has rare mobility for someone 6-4, 318 pounds.	Kenape Eliapo, Fr.
DE	Soli Lefiti*	Sr.	Learned on the job last season; made 24 stops.	Casey Sutera, Jr.
LB	Joe Jiannoni*	Jr.	Moves outside from the middle.	Taylor Miller, Jr.
LB	Loma Olevao	Jr.	Still competing with backup Chet Blasucci.	Chet Blasucci, Jr.
LB	Kyle Brady*	Jr.	This spot is the deepest among the linebackers.	Malakai Mokofisi, Jr.
CB	Eric Weddle*	Sr.	Superstar looks to repeat MWC Defensive POY award.	Eric Shyne, Sr.
CB	Shaun Harper	Sr.	In a position battle with Bryce McCain.	Bryce McCain, So.
SS	Casey Evans*	Sr.	Second in team in tackles (89), and had five INTs.	Kyler Rushton, Fr.
FS	Steve Tate*	Jr.	Had eight tackles in dominating bowl game.	Joe Guilian, Fr.

*Returning starter

of the Year.

A starter since his freshman year, Weddle has played almost everywhere in the Utes secondary, in addition to returning punts and holding for place-kicks. He locked down Georgia Tech's Calvin Johnson in the Emerald Bowl, holding him to two receptions for 19 yards.

"He's the marquee player in the Mountain West as far as I'm concerned," Whittingham said.

Likely destined for more cornerback than safety this season, Weddle can do it all. He had 11 tackles for loss last season, as well as four interceptions and 12 passes broken up.

Up front, Whittingham considers tackle Kelly Talavou the premier defensive lineman in the league. He moves over

from nose guard to replace four-year starter Steve Fifita. Moving up into a starting role is converted offensive lineman Paul Soliai.

The only big question mark on defense is who replaces outside linebacker Spencer Toone, a seventh-round draft pick. Joe Jiannoni, who had 73 tackles as a middle linebacker last season, looks to be that guy.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Punter Louie Sakoda takes over the place-kicking chores, while the race is on at punter. Whittingham would prefer Sakoda take on only one of the jobs. Eric Weddle remains the punt returner and Brent Casteel will again return kickoffs.

— Natalie Meisler



NEW MEXICO

LOBOS

NEW MEXICO LOBOS NEW MEXICO LOBOS NEW MEXICO LOBOS NEW MEXICO

AT A GLANCE

2005

6-5 overall, 4-4 MWC (T-4th)

COACH

Rocky Long — At New Mexico and overall: 46-50, 8 years

RETURNING STARTERS

14; 8 offense, 4 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH

QB Kole McKamey, OL Robert Turner, LB Quincy Black, LB Cody Kase, S Blake Ligon, PK Kenny Byrd

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

QB Kole McKamey is in his third season as a starter, and he will operate with an offensive scheme that could rejuvenate the attack. Defense is always a strong suit for the Lobos. There's a winning atmosphere, as the Lobos go for a sixth straight winning season. League favorites Utah and TCU have to visit Albuquerque.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The loss of RB DonTrell Moore and WR Hank Baskett III takes a huge chunk out of the offense. The defensive line is undersized.

KEY LOSSES

RB DonTrell Moore, WR Hank Baskett III, C Ryan Cook, CB Gabriel Fulbright

OVERVIEW

Overall, the Lobos have too much rebuilding to do to fit into their usual mold of contending for the Mountain West title. But Long has established a solid program, and a bowl-eligible season is realistic. Lucky for the Lobos that the NCAA certified a new bowl game in Albuquerque, giving the Mountain West another bowl slot. The Lobos would make a perfect first-season entry for the bowl.

McKamey Takes Lead Role in Revamped Offense

Returning two-year starter Kole McKamey, a steady but not flashy quarterback, will run his third offense in as many seasons.

New offensive coordinator Bob Toledo and head coach Rocky Long scrapped the modified spread from a year ago to install a version of the West Coast scheme that Toledo used while head coach at UCLA.

McKamey's accuracy took a big leap last season, to 62.3 percent, and he's one of the top all-around QBs in the Mountain West, with four career 100-yard rushing games.

"We'll try to run and use some play-action pass," Long said. "It's tailored to our own personality. There will be a lot of two-back stuff involved with the play action."

The first order of business was to find a running back to step into the gaping void left by the graduation of DonTrell Moore, who was the sixth player in Division I-A history to gain at least 1,000 yards in each of his four seasons.

Martelius Epps, who carried 16 times for 75 yards in the spring game, goes into the fall atop the depth chart. No runner except Moore gained more than 30 yards in a game last season. Epps played in only one game.

The receiving corps also suffered a blow with the loss of Hank Baskett III, who caught 67 passes for 1,071 yards and nine touchdowns. Veterans Travis Brown and Thomas Wilson, among others, should step forward.

"Without Hank, we'll have more passes to three guys instead of 90 percent to one," said Long. "It might make the offense more versatile and diverse."

The line also suffered a key graduation loss with Ryan Cook, arguably the best center in UNM history. Robert Turner moves from guard to tackle to anchor the line.

DEFENSE

Long is a defensive innovator, and his 3-3-5 blitzing attack has been widely copied around the Mountain West to the point where it lost its novelty. Several teams are adjusting for personnel, including New Mexico.

Long is looking into playing with a right and left "Lobo" — a hybrid safety/linebacker position.

There were positive signs with 10 sacks in the spring game, including three by designated Lobo back Quincy Black. He and outside backer Cody Kase (11.5 tackles for loss last season) could be among the top defensive playmakers in the league.

New Mexico has to restock the entire line and both playmaking cornerbacks. Sophomore safeties Blake Ligon and DeAndre Wright could be fixtures for the next three years.

None of the front three weighs more than 250 pounds, but quickness, not size, has usually been the hallmark of New Mexico defenses.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Kenny Byrd, one of the best place-kickers in the league, returns after making 13 of 15 field goal attempts.

Jordan Scott took the lead in the spring to replace punter Tyler Gaus. Gabriel Fulbright was the main return specialist, so that position is up for grabs.

— Natalie Meisler

COWBOYS



WYOMING COWBOYS WYOMING COWBOYS WYOMING COWBOYS WYOMING COWBOYS WYOMING COWBOYS

AT A GLANCE

2005

4-7 overall, 2-6 MWC (8th)

COACH

Joe Glenn — At Wyoming: 15-20, 3 years;
overall: 54-26, 6 years

RETURNING STARTERS

10; 5 offense, 5 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH

RB Wynel Seldon, OT Chase Johnson,
LB Ward Dobbs, S John Wendling

PRIMARY STRENGTHS

Defense should be a strong suit with ample depth up front and John Wendling in an otherwise inexperienced secondary. The Cowboys look to be a running force behind a veteran offensive line while a new passing game develops.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

With a tougher-than-usual non-league schedule, Wyoming's new QB — whoever wins the job — will have to develop in a hurry. The Cowboys need to find a big playmaker on offense to replace Jovon Bouknight. The kicking game, usually a Wyoming strength, also is under development.

KEY LOSSES

WR/KR Jovon Bouknight, CB Derrick Martin, DL Dusty Hoffschneider, PK Deric Yaussi, TE John Wadkowski

OVERVIEW:

The Cowboys lived on the 2004 Las Vegas Bowl upset of UCLA through the first half of the 2005 season. An epidemic of turnovers led to a reality check, and Wyoming returned to a typical 2-6 MWC finish. This is a critical year for the program to show 2004 wasn't a fluke.

Cowboys Try to Forget About Last Year's Finish

OFFENSE

For the first time since 2000, Wyoming won't go into the season with a Bramlet brother starting at quarterback.

From Corey Bramlet to Casey Bramlet to ... well, check back in the fall.

Jacob Doss, a 6-2 junior, saw action in half the games last season as a third-stringer. He ended spring atop the depth chart, but it's still too close to call. Redshirt freshman Karsten Sween was next, followed by sophomore Stinson Dean and junior college import Ian Hetrick.

Whoever lines up behind center will be asked to take better care of the ball. The Cowboys, after a 4-1 start that included an upset at Ole Miss, lost their final six games of last season. The primary culprit was the year-ending total of 32 turnovers — 19 interceptions and 13 fumbles.

When the offense turned over the ball four times in the spring game, coach Joe Glenn said, "we can't help but be concerned about a couple of fumbles and a couple of interceptions. We tried that last year, and it didn't work."

The running game shapes up as a strength, thanks to three seniors on the offensive line and sophomore Wynel Seldon, a major surprise as a freshman as he rushed for 871 yards and 11 touchdowns.

But there is plenty of ongoing competition there, too, as 2004 standouts Ivan Harrison and Joseph Harris return after each missing last season with injuries. Both are sitting out the first three games on an undisclosed team rules violation.

Sophomore Devin Moore, who had 26

carries last season, also is in the mix.

The receiving corps is young after the departure of one of the most productive Wyoming wideouts ever, Jovon Bouknight. With 10 players catching 21 passes in the spring game, Wyoming won't lack for receiving candidates.

DEFENSE

Wyoming introduced a 3-4 package in an effort to get the best athletes on the field and take advantage of ample depth at linebacker. Ward Dobbs earned All-MWC honorable mention as a freshman linebacker and moves inside this season in the new scheme.

Senior nose guard Jake Mayes anchors the defensive line. End Mike Groover had a team-high 6.5 sacks.

The secondary suffered a blow when cornerback Derrick Martin, one of the top athletes in the Mountain West, declared early for the NFL draft (he was a sixth-round pick).

That leaves safety John Wendling as the undisputed leader of the defense. The senior ran a 4.38 at junior timing day to get himself on the NFL radar. He can play either safety position.

SPECIAL TEAMS

A replacement for superb place-kicker Deric Yaussi won't come until the freshman class arrives. Punt returner Hoost Marsh will add kick return duties, and Wendling might help out in an effort to replace Bouknight, who ranked 11th nationally in kickoff returns.

— Natalie Meisler

Full Steam Ahead to the BCS

Had this season's BCS structure been in effect a year ago, TCU would have played in the fifth bowl, making it two in a row for the "non-BCS" Mountain West.

Rather than rule tweakings, the Horned Frogs had only themselves to blame for stumbling against SMU a week after stunning Oklahoma in the opener. TCU ran the table the rest of the way, in the process quickly wearing out its welcome as the new kid on the Mountain West block.

There's no discounting the Horned Frogs' chances of repeating the MWC title, but they wear a huge target on those purple jerseys.

"We know that feeling. TCU will have it the same this year," said Utah's Kyle Whittingham, referring to the bullseye he inherited last season from Urban Meyer.

With the lightening-quick defense that took the MWC by storm, and a loaded backfield, TCU should contend again.

TCU still hasn't visited half the league sites, but the Horned Frogs' home heat and humidity proved a huge advantage.

"With the year they had, I'm not sure how you can't name TCU as the favorite," said second-year BYU coach Bronco Mendenhall. "Teams in this league are committed that they will not repeat."

New Mexico's Rocky Long said: "TCU is the best by far. They have most of their players back. You put Utah and BYU in the next group. All the rest of us, you throw in a hat and no one knows."

Given those coaches' comments, we'll go against the grain a bit and pick Utah, which has restocked and is out to prove its undefeated 2004 season wasn't an aberration. The Utes also host TCU.

BYU, with the league's top quarterback in John Beck, has the offense to impress pollsters and computers alike, but must step up the defense a few notches.

Elsewhere around the league, Long points to various unknowns — a new coaching staff at San Diego State and UNLV's influx of Pac-10 transfers.

Mendenhall won't count out any of the MWC's long-established coaches and their programs — New Mexico's Long, Colorado State's Sonny Lubick and Air Force's Fisher DeBerry. Joe Glenn has impressed the league in his three years at Wyoming.

Bottom line: Chances are good that one MWC team will land in the expanded BCS process, with an extra game and less strict criteria for automatic berths from the so-called mid-majors.

— Natalie Meisler

Mountain West Picks

	GOOD NEWS	BAD NEWS	OUR CALL
1. Utah	Three excellent QBs; DB Eric Weddle is MWC's best defender.	The running game goes into the season with some question marks.	After steady progress in rebuilding '05, the Utes will regain '04 magic.
2. TCU	Frogs have quickest defense in MWC, great depth at running back.	Lost most of OL and secondary that dominated the conference.	Frogs have BCS potential, but wear a big target in a league full of parity.
3. Brig. Young	John Beck is the top QB in MWC; running game is solid.	Significant improvement needed on defense (417 ypg allowed).	Offense is vintage BYU, but defense needs to step up for title contention.
4. Colorado St.	Rams feature the return of a running QB, punishing ground game.	Defense ranked 115th nationally against the run last season.	Defense improved, but still far removed from dominant CSU teams of past.
5. New Mexico	New offensive coordinator Bob Toledo livens up attack.	Lobos suffered most extensive graduation losses in Mountain West.	Looks like a major rebuilding season for an established program.
6. San Diego St.	Defensive experience and new energy with Chuck Long's staff.	Aztec traditionally underachieve; can Long change that?	If confidence builds early, SDSU becomes the dark horse for a bowl bid.
7. UNLV	A year of familiarity with system; extensive help from transfers.	No marquee players on offense; defense needs major work.	Rebels can't help but make progress; still a long way from the top.
8. Air Force	Shaun Carney, the best AFA passing QB in years, returns as a junior.	Running game no longer dominant; defense no match for MWC's best.	Still dangerous on occasion, but the best days might be behind AFA.
9. Wyoming	Defense is improving; O-line should power a good running game.	Only MWC team without QB experience. WR Jovon Bouknight is gone.	Progress stalled in midseason of '05. A pivotal year for the program.

Lindy's 2006 ALL-MWC Team

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	John Beck	Sr.	BYU
RB	Kyle Bell	Jr.	Colorado St.
RB	Curtis Brown	Sr.	BYU
WR	Brian Hernandez	Sr.	Utah
WR	Johnny Walker	Jr.	Colorado St.
TE	Jonny Harline	Sr.	BYU
C	Jason Karcher	Sr.	Wyoming
OL	Herbert Taylor	Sr.	TCU
OL	Jake Kuresa	Sr.	BYU
OL	Tavo Tupola	Sr.	Utah
OL	Robert Turner	Sr.	New Mexico
AP	Hoost Marsh	Jr.	Wyoming
PK	Chris Manfredini	Jr.	TCU

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Tommy Blake	Jr.	TCU
DL	Chase Ortiz	Jr.	TCU
DL	Gilberto Perez	Sr.	Air Force
DL	Kelly Talavou	Sr.	Utah
LB	Cameron Jensen	Sr.	BYU
LB	Jason Phillips	So.	TCU
LB	Beau Bell	Jr.	UNLV
DB	Eric Weddle	Sr.	Utah
DB	John Wendling	Sr.	Wyoming
DB	Casey Evans	Sr.	Utah
DB	Terrell Maze	Jr.	San Diego St.
P	Jimmie Kaylor	Jr.	Colorado St.

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	Jeff Ballard	Sr.	TCU
RB	Robert Merrill	Sr.	TCU
RB	Wynel Seldon	So.	Wyoming
WR	Quentily Harmon	Sr.	TCU
WR	Chaz Schilens	So.	San Diego St.
TE	Kory Sperry	Jr.	Colorado St.
C	Tim Goins	Jr.	UNLV
OL	Chase Johnson	Sr.	Wyoming
OL	Clint Oldenburg	Sr.	Colorado St.
OL	Josh Day	Sr.	Colorado St.
OL	Robert Kraay	Sr.	Air Force
AP	Brent Casteel	So.	Utah
PK	Sergio Aguayo	Jr.	UNLV

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Jesse Nading	Jr.	Colorado St.
DL	Howie Fuimaono	Sr.	UNLV
DL	Antwan Applewhite	Jr.	San Diego St.
DL	Jonathan Bailes	Sr.	San Diego St.
LB	Joe Martin	Sr.	San Diego St.
LB	Robert Henson	So.	TCU
LB	Ward Dobbs	So.	Wyoming
DB	Robert Herbert	Sr.	Colorado St.
DB	Eric Wright	Jr.	UNLV
DB	Reggie Grigsby	Sr.	San Diego St.
DB	Bobby Giannini	Jr.	Air Force
P	Michael Hughes	Jr.	San Diego St.

THE BIG ONES

Sept. 2	BYU at Arizona
Sept. 2	Utah at UCLA
Sept. 9	Colorado vs. Colorado State (Denver)
Sept. 9	Wyoming at Virginia
Sept. 16	BYU at Boston College
Sept. 16	San Diego State at Wisconsin
Sept. 16	Texas Tech at TCU
Sept. 28	BYU at TCU
Oct. 5	TCU at Utah
Oct. 19	Utah at New Mexico
Nov. 4	BYU at Colorado State
Nov. 11	Notre Dame at Air Force
Nov. 11	Colorado State at Utah
Nov. 25	BYU at Utah
Nov. 25	TCU at Colorado State

Bowl Connections

LAS VEGAS
MWC #1 vs. Pac-10 #4-5

FORT WORTH
MWC vs. C-USA

POINTSETTIA (San Diego)
MWC vs. at-large

NEW MEXICO
MWC vs. WAC

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. John Beck	QB	Sr.	BYU	65 percent accuracy, quick release, can move out of pocket.
2. Jake Kuresa	OT	Sr.	BYU	A mountain at 6-4, 339.
3. Eric Weddle	DB	Sr.	Utah	Can play corner or safety, contribute on special teams.
4. Jonny Harline	TE	Sr.	BYU	H-back sized at 6-4, 226 but catches everything.
5. Robert Turner	OL	Sr.	New Mexico	Can play guard or tackle.
6. Tommy Blake	DE	Jr.	TCU	Had 40 solo tackles last season, including seven sacks.
7. Chase Ortiz	DE	Jr.	TCU	Size (6-3, 250), stats interchangeable with Blake.
8. Eric Wright	CB	Jr.	UNLV	USC transfer looks to make a statement this season.
9. Kory Sperry	TE	Jr.	Colorado State	6-6, 260 with great hands and decent speed for size.
10. Ben Stratton	S	Sr.	Colorado State	Ferocious hitter must come back from ACL surgery.

Most Valuable Player

John Beck,
QB, BYU

Offensive Player of the Year

Kyle Bell,
RB, Colorado State

Defensive Player of the Year

Eric Weddle,
DB, Utah

Newcomer of the Year

Eric Wright,
CB, UNLV

HONOR ROLL

Most Accurate Passer	John Beck, QB	BYU
Strongest Arm	John Beck, QB	BYU
Best Scrambler	Shaun Carney, QB	Air Force
Coolest in the Clutch	Brett Ratliff, QB	Utah
Toughest to Bring Down	Kyle Bell, RB	Colorado State
Best Hands	Jonny Harline, TE	BYU
Most Dangerous Deep Threat	Johnny Walker, WR	Colorado State
Best Pass Blocker	Jake Kuresa, OT	BYU
Best Run Blocker	Robert Turner, OL	New Mexico
Best Pass Rusher	Chase Ortiz, DE	TCU
Best Cover Man	Eric Weddle, DB	Utah
Special Teams Demon	Joey Rucks, DB	Colorado State

Still an Air of Mystery in Second Year of New Era

Last summer, no one seemed able to pick the Conference USA race with any confidence.

With the conference in flux — four teams leaving, six teams arriving — most guesses centered on Southern Miss winning the East, and UTEP winning the West. Instead, Tulsa and UCF won their divisions, with the Golden Hurricane victorious in the first-ever C-USA championship game.

One year later, predicting the division champions isn't any easier.

"I sound like a broken record," said Jeff Bower, who enters his 16th season as coach at Southern Miss.

"Last year I thought anything could happen and certainly it did. I still contend there's a lot of depth, a lot of competition in the league. I don't know if I had to pick a clear-cut favorite who that would be."

UAB's Watson Brown insists picking the

conference race is "impossible."

"This league is too equal," Brown said.

"Really, truthfully, everybody can beat everybody every week. The two teams that won it last year were picked near the bottom of their divisions. It's all going to be based on who stays healthy, who wins the close games early, who gets the confidence from winning those close games and who finishes strong."

In the West, it could be Tulsa, UTEP, Houston or even SMU contending for the division and bowl invites. Only Tulane and Rice appear to be on the outside looking in.

In the East, UCF and Southern Miss appear to be the most likely contenders, but UAB remains capable, and East Carolina should continue to improve. With the loss of All-American running back DeAngelo Williams, Memphis may be the conference's biggest mystery, but the Tigers still look like a con-

tender if the right quarterback emerges.

Even Marshall should be much better in its second season in the conference.

"They were pretty young last year," Bower said, "but they've got a great running back and a real athletic quarterback and played really good defense last year, so that's a tough combination."

If those same qualities are the keys to the C-USA race again this year, it's hard to pick against last year's winners.

The Golden Hurricane and the Golden Knights return starting quarterbacks, experienced defenses and capable tailbacks. Then again, both teams made a habit of winning close games last year and they start over with new kickers this season.

"There could be a lot of teams competing for the championship this year," Bower said.

— Richard Scott

Conference USA Picks

Good news

Bad news

Our call

1. UCF

Loads of experience back from young team that grew up fast last year.

UCF won't sneak up anyone in '06; help needed at WR, DE and LB.

Returning experience, toughness in all three phases will be tough to beat.

2. Southern Miss

Nine returning offensive starters includes a strong offensive line.

Plenty of holes to fill on defense; new QB; another tough schedule.

Improved running game takes heat off QB and gives USM chance to contend.

3. UAB

Blazers have depth and experience at most spots; solid linebackers.

Offense starting over at QB and center; tough schedule from start to finish.

Blazers blew close games in 2005; must win those to have a chance in '06.

4. Memphis

Eight returning offensive starters; experienced O-line and secondary.

RB DeAngelo Williams is gone, and there's no proven QB.

Tigers will surprise if the new QB (Martin Hankins?) spreads the ball around.

5. E. Carolina

Second year under Skip Holtz; improving experience, depth and defense.

Inexperienced O-line; JC transfers must make an immediate impact.

ECU could surprise if QB James Pinkney and running game become more consistent.

6. Marshall

Second year under Mark Snyder; young roster with 19 returning starters.

Still young at many spots; uncertainty at QB, WR and kicking game.

Herd will be more competitive, but must become more consistent.

1. Tulsa

16 starters return for league champs; proven players at QB, LB, DB.

Playmakers needed after loss of TE Garrett Mills and RB Uriel Parrish.

With depth, experience and talent, hard to pick against the Hurricane.

2. UTEP

Talented playmakers at QB, RB and WR; 17 returning starters.

Must cut back on turnovers; key division games are at Tulsa, Houston.

Might be the most talented team in C-USA ... and also its most inconsistent.

3. Houston

Offense will be tough to stop; get Tulsa and UTEP at home.

Cougars lack size, strength in defensive front seven.

Veteran team should be right there competing for the league title.

4. SMU

Team finished strong last season; improved run game on both sides.

Lack of proven players at QB and CB; uncertainty in kicking game.

Mustangs close to getting over hump for winning record and bowl game.

5. Tulane

Team is back on campus after Katrina; '06 can't be any worse than '05.

Some holes at LB, DB, OL; rugged schedule opens with three road games.

Green Wave should be more competitive, but faces steep uphill climb.

6. Rice

New coaching staff brings new approach; nine starters return on offense.

Gotta be patient with new offensive scheme; big holes on defense.

Owls can't be much worse ... but probably won't be much better.

EAST

WEST

Lindy's 2006 ALL C-USA Team

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	Jordan Palmer	Sr.	UTEP
RB	Kevin Smith	So.	UCF
RB	Marcus Thomas	Jr.	UTEP
WR	Aundrae Allison	Sr.	East Carolina
WR	Vincent Marshall	Sr.	Houston
TE	Shawn Nelson	So.	Southern Miss
C	C. Gagne-Marcoux	Sr.	UCF
OL	George Batiste	Sr.	Southern Miss
OL	Jeff Perrett	Sr.	Tulsa
OL	Blake Butler	Sr.	Memphis
OL	Travis Cooley	Sr.	Southern Miss
AP	Jessie Henderson	So.	SMU
PK	Darren McCaleb	Sr.	Southern Miss

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Justin Rogers	Sr.	SMU
DL	Larry McSwain	Sr.	UAB
DL	Marcus Hands	Jr.	East Carolina
DL	Alex Obomese	Sr.	UTEP
LB	Nick Bunting	Sr.	Tulsa
LB	Jeremy Jones	Sr.	UTEP
LB	Orlandus King	Sr.	UAB
DB	Joey Sturdivant	Sr.	SMU
DB	Bobby Blackshire	Sr.	Tulsa
DB	Wesley Smith	Sr.	Memphis
DB	Joe Burnett	So.	UCF
P	Michael Gibson	Sr.	Memphis

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	Paul Smith	Jr.	Tulsa
RB	DeMyron Martin	So.	SMU
RB	Ahmad Bradshaw	Jr.	Marshall
WR	Mike Walker	Jr.	UCF
WR	Johnnie Lee Higgins	Sr.	UTEP
TE	Ryan Kennedy	Sr.	SMU
C	Doug Legursky	Jr.	Marshall
OL	Julius Wilson	Sr.	UAB
OL	Chris Clark	Jr.	Southern Miss
OL	Rolf Krueger	Sr.	Rice
OL	SirVincent Rogers	Jr.	Houston
AP	Norris Drinkard	Sr.	UAB
PK	Reagan Schneider	Sr.	UTEP

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Zach West	Sr.	UTEP
DL	Adrian Haywood	Sr.	SMU
DL	Shaunte Hunt	Sr.	East Carolina
DL	Antonio Harris	Jr.	Tulane
LB	Nelson Coleman	Jr.	Tulsa
LB	Wade Koehl	Sr.	Houston
LB	Mastaki Smith	Sr.	UAB
DB	Brandon Sumrall	Jr.	Southern Miss
DB	Nick Graham	Sr.	Tulsa
DB	Rocky Schwartz	Jr.	Houston
DB	Anthony Germany	Jr.	Tulsa
P	Chris Beckman	Sr.	Tulane

THE BIG ONES

Sept. 2	Marshall at West Virginia
Sept. 9	Tulsa at BYU
Sept. 9	Texas Tech at UTEP
Sept. 16	N.C. State at Southern Miss
Sept. 23	West Virginia at East Carolina
Sept. 23	Oklahoma State at Houston
Sept. 26	Southern Miss at UCF
Sept. 30	Tennessee at Memphis
Oct. 3	Southern Miss at Tulsa
Oct. 7	Virginia at East Carolina
Oct. 13	Pittsburgh at UCF
Oct. 21	UTEP at Houston
Oct. 27	UTEP at Tulsa
Nov. 4	Southern Miss at Memphis
Nov. 4	Tulsa at Houston

Bowl Connection

Champion
Liberty vs. SEC

C-USA #2
GMAC vs. MAC or WAC

C-USA
Houston vs. Big 12

C-USA
Forth Worth vs. Mtn. West

C-USA
Hawaii vs. WAC

C-USA
New Orleans vs. Sun Belt Champ

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Larry McSwain	DE	Sr.	UAB	17 sacks, 22 tackles for loss over past two seasons.
2. Shawn Nelson	TE	So.	Southern Miss	Makes plays as receiver, improving as blocker.
3. Joe Burnett	CB/PR	So.	UCF	Lockdown CB with nose for ball, ability to break punts.
4. Kevin Kolb	QB	Sr.	Houston	Makes plays with arm, feet and instinct.
5. George Batiste	OG	Sr.	Southern Miss	At his best moving the pile.
6. C. Gagne-Marcoux	C	Sr.	UCF	Adept at both run and pass blocking.
7. Aundrae Allison	WR	Sr.	East Carolina	Big-play WR can stretch field as receiver; runner.
8. Jordan Palmer	QB	Sr.	UTEP	Must first show he can cut down on turnovers.
9. Jeremy Jones	OLB	Sr.	UTEP	Big hitter might be better at MLB in NFL.
10. Mike Walker	WR	Sr.	UCF	Must re-establish deep threat after offseason surgery.

Most Valuable Player

Paul Smith
QB, Tulsa

Offensive Player of the Year

Jordan Palmer
QB, UTEP

Defensive Player of the Year

Larry McSwain
DE, UAB

Newcomer of the Year

Josh Johnson
LB, Marshall

HONOR ROLL

Most Accurate Passer	Paul Smith, QB	Tulsa
Strongest Arm	Jordan Palmer QB	UTEP
Best Scrambler	Steven Moffett, QB	UCF
Cooldest in the Clutch	Paul Smith, QB	Tulsa
Toughest to Bring Down	Kevin Smith, RB	UCF
Best Hands	Vincent Marshall, WR	Houston
Most Dangerous Deep Threat	Aundrae Allison, WR	East Carolina
Best Pass Blocker	Jeff Perrett, OT	Tulsa
Best Run Blocker	George Batiste, OG	Southern Miss
Best Pass Rusher	Larry McSwain, DE	UAB
Best Coverage	Joe Burnett, CB	UCF
Special Teams Demon	Jonathan Lindley, DB	SMU



COUGARS

HOUSTON COUGARS HOUSTON COUGARS HOUSTON COUGARS HOUSTON COUGARS

AT A GLANCE**2005**

6-6 overall, 4-4 C-USA (T-3rd, West)

COACHArt Briles — At Houston and overall:
16-20, 3 years**RETURNING STARTERS**

19; 7 offense, 10 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCHQB Kevin Kolb, RB Jackie Battle,
WR Anthony Alridge, WR Vincent
Marshall, DE Cody Pree, DE Phillip Hunt,
LB Wade Koehl, CB Kenneth Fontenette**PRIMARY STRENGTHS**UH should again be at or near the top of
C-USA in total offense. Kevin Kolb should
own all of the school's career passing
marks before the end of the season, and
has a wealth of great receivers to throw
to as all three starters return for this
prolific aerial attack.**POTENTIAL PROBLEMS**Several new starters on both sides of the
ball are coming off injury-filled seasons.
The defense has a brand new coordinator
and will still need to step up its level of
play.**KEY LOSSES**RB Ryan Gilbert, TE Blade Bassler,
DE Kade Lane**OVERVIEW**With QB Kevin Kolb being a senior, the
time is now to win the C-USA title. If the
Cougars' defense keeps improving, this
year's squad could be the best under
Art Briles. If they don't grab that C-USA
championship, they should still get to
their third bowl game in four seasons.**A Little Defense Could Go a Long Way**

Houston put up more big numbers last season, leading Conference USA in total offense and ranking highly in three other offensive categories. A big reason for that success is a wide-open scheme that allows record-setting quarterback Kevin Kolb to thrive.

Last year's squad went 6-6, but of its five regular-season setbacks, four were to bowl teams and three were by five points or less. The other was to a much-improved SMU team.

In his first three seasons coaching his alma mater, head coach Art Briles has led UH to two bowl games. But if there has been an Achilles' heel for his teams, it's defense.

Defensively, Houston was much improved in 2005, but still ranked in the lower half of C-USA. If the Cougs are going to become a contender for a conference championship, a better defense is a must. UH already has the top offense in the league and just needs a good defense to go with it.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Kevin Kolb returns for a final season and should end up owning every major passing record in school history. He is the cog in a high-octane offense that should put up more heady numbers.

Kolb has passed for 9,155 career yards, with 55 touchdowns and 27 interceptions.

Replacing first-team all-conference

running back Ryan Gilbert will be Jackie Battle, who rushed for 408 yards on 106 carries last season. Speedy senior Roshawn Pope, a former safety, will back him up and also see time at utility back. Freshman Chris Mitchell, a converted linebacker, is the fullback.

All three starters return at wide receiver, including Vincent Marshall, who should become the school's career leader in catches and receiving yards. He has 2,791 career receiving yards, more than anyone in the nation.

There's also Donnie Avery, a true deep threat who last year hauled in 44 passes for 688 yards; big-play receiver Anthony Alridge, who averaged nearly 23 yards per catch in 2005; and Arizona transfer Biren Ealy, who could post solid numbers in his lone season as a Cougar.

Others who should see action include Brennan Gleason, Jeron Harvey and Perry McDaniel.

Last year's starting tight end, Blade Bassler, has departed, but Mark Hafner, a great blocker with soft hands who was injured most of last year, steps in. He will be pushed by Brian Boehm and former basketball player, 6-8 Rodney Hannah.

Three starters return on the line. Junior Jeff Akeroyd is the new starting left guard after missing most of 2005 because of injury. Byron Alfred, who started 10 games at right guard in 2004, reclaims his old spot after injuries



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 166.4 ypg rushing (4th in C-USA/39th NCAA), 272.3 passing (3rd/22nd), 438.8 total offense (1st/19th), 28.1 ppg (5th/51st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Kevin Kolb*	Sr.	Could break all school passing records this season.	Clint Walraven, Fr.
RB	Jackie Battle	Sr.	Top returning rusher played in all 12 games last year.	Roshawn Pope, Sr.
WR	Anthony Alridge*	Jr.	Averaged nearly 24 yards per catch last season.	Jeron Harvey, Jr.
WR	Vincent Marshall*	Sr.	Has caught at least one pass in 36 straight contests.	Perry McDaniel, Jr.
WR	Donnie Avery*	Jr.	Deep threat was second on team in rec. yards and TDs.	Brennan Gleason, So.
TE	Mark Hafner	So.	Returns from injury-plagued 2005 to claim starting job.	Brian Boehm, So.
LT	SirVincent Rogers*	Jr.	Heads into third straight season starting on O-line.	Jason Wagner, Jr.
LG	Jeff Akeroyd	Jr.	Now healthy after missing most of '05 with knee injury.	Jerrod Butler, Fr.
C	Sterling Doty*	Sr.	This season will be third straight as starting center.	Jake Ebner, So.
RG	Byron Alfred	Jr.	Started 10 games here in 2004; injured most of 2005.	Michael Bloesch, So.
RT	Dustin Dickinson*	Jr.	One of four junior starters in offensive line.	Matt Hart, Fr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 177.2 ypg rushing (8th in C-USA/37th), 220.2 passing (6th/60th), 397.4 total defense (8th/76th), 27.0 ppg (8th/7-69th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Cody Pree*	So.	C-USA All-Freshmen team member had four sacks.	L.C. Kirkpatrick, Sr.
NT	Marquay Love*	Sr.	True force on D-line started last nine games of 2005.	Ricky Barela, Sr.
DE	Phillip Hunt	So.	Speedy DE was on C-USA All-Freshmen team.	Anthony Roulette, Fr.
LB	Wade Koehl*	Sr.	Top-notch LB will be candidate for national awards.	Scott Lee, Sr.
LB	Cody Lubojasky*	So.	As redshirt freshman, started all 12 games last season.	Rodney Rideau, So.
LB	Trent Allen*	Jr.	Started all 12 games and recovered two fumbles in '05.	C.J. Cavness, Fr.
LB	Brendan Pahulu*	Jr.	Was Cougars' second-leading tackler in 2005.	Chris Pilot, So.
CB	Willie Gaston*	Sr.	Started 11 of 12 games at corner for Cougs in 2005.	Quinte Williams, So.
CB	Kenneth Fontenette*	So.	Had four INTs and named to C-USA All-Freshmen team.	Kellen Yancy, Jr.
SS	Rocky Schwartz*	Jr.	Has now started in 23 straight games at strong safety.	Joseph Gonzales, Jr.
FS	Will Gulley*	Sr.	Athletic player back after missing '05 with injury.	Ernest Miller, So.

*Returning starter

sidelined him last year.

Center Sterling Doty and left tackle SirVincent Rogers, both three-year starters, return to anchor this solid unit.

DEFENSE

The good news is that 10 starters return from a greatly improved unit. The biggest change will be new defensive coordinator Alan Weddell, who last year was the inside linebackers coach.

UH has no shortage of talent on the defensive side of the ball and a great mix of veterans and underclassmen, meaning this year's defense will be rock-solid.

The entire linebacking corps returns — Trent Allen, Wade Koehl, Cody Lubojasky and Brendan Pahulu — and it is a stellar group (although it does

need to be stronger against the run). Koehl, who had 14 tackles for loss last season, is one of the best linebackers in Conference USA.

Lubojasky started all 12 games last year as a redshirt freshman, while Pahulu was the team's second leading tackler (94) a year ago.

One hole exists on the line, where end Kade Lane has graduated. His replacement is Phillip Hunt, who last year earned a spot on the C-USA All-Freshmen team. Fellow end Cody Pree earned the same honors. Nose tackle Marquay Love returns after starting the final nine games of 2005.

Cornerback Kenneth Fontenette, who had four interceptions and earned league all-freshmen honors last year, will be

joined by Willie Gaston at the other corner spot.

Leading tackler Rocky Schwartz (114 stops) has started 23 straight games at strong safety. Also back is talented free safety Will Gulley, who missed all of 2005 with a knee injury.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Justin Laird will again do the punting. Field goal duty will be split between Ben Bell, who will handle extra points and short attempts, and T.J. Lawrence, the team's long-distance kicker.

Vincent Marshall will return both punts and kickoffs, with fellow wide receiver Donnie Avery assisting with kickoff returns.

— Steve Hunt



UTEP

MINERS

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AT A GLANCE**2005**

8-4 overall, 5-3 C-USA (2nd, West)

COACHMike Price: At UTEP — 16-8, 2 years;
overall: 145-130, 24 years**RETURNING STARTERS**

19; 8 offense, 9 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCHQB Jordan Palmer, RB Marcus Thomas,
WR Johnnie Lee Higgins Jr., C Robby
Felix, DE Alex Obomese, LB Troy Collavo,
LB Jeremy Jones**PRIMARY STRENGTHS**Senior QB Jordan Palmer leads a passing
attack that ranked first in the league last
season. An experienced defense has
standout linebackers in Troy Collavo and
Jeremy Jones, the team's top two tacklers
from a year ago.**POTENTIAL PROBLEMS**The Miners had two chances last year to
clinch the C-USA West Division title, but
failed to convert. On many occasions,
the Miners were their own worst enemy
in terms of penalties and turnovers.**KEY LOSSES**RB Matt Austin, RB Tyler Ebell, WR Chris
Francies, LT Josh House, LG Jose Garcia**OVERVIEW**Mike Price has done a great job of build-
ing UTEP in his first two seasons. The
Miners clearly have the talent to win the
C-USA championship, but for them to
make that leap to champions, they need
to be better fundamentally. That means
taking care of the ball (ranked 10th in
the league in turnover margin) and draw-
ing fewer penalties (second-most penal-
ized team in the league).**Redemption on Miners' Minds in 2006**

In coach Mike Price's third year, UTEP is on the brink of something big, coming off back-to-back bowl games for the first time in 50 years.

But if the Miners are to take that next step and win the Conference USA title, they will need to rebound from a disappointing end to last season.

The Miners finished 8-4 but lost their final three games. It could have been UTEP, and not Tulsa, who ended up winning the C-USA championship last December.

With two regular-season games left, all UTEP had to do was beat either UAB or SMU to play for the title. The Miners lost both after serious meltdowns in each game, including committing a season-high seven turnovers in the 40-24 loss to SMU.

A 45-13 blowout defeat in the Motor City Bowl to Toledo was how they ended the year.

Can the Miners use last year's disappointment as motivation to finish what they started in 2005 by winning a C-USA title? It's a possibility.

OFFENSE

Senior quarterback Jordan Palmer, one of eight returning offensive starters, leads a potent air attack that was tops in C-USA a year ago. But for him to realize his immense potential, Palmer must cut down on his turnovers.

Of his 19 interceptions last season, nine came in UTEP's three regular-season losses. Palmer also had trouble holding

onto the ball at times, fumbling eight times, losing four, in those three regular-season losses.

On the plus side, he threw for 3,503 yards and 29 touchdowns. With his size (6-5, 235) and bloodlines (Carson's brother), he's high on the NFL's list of senior quarterbacks.

At running back, Matt Austin and Tyler Ebell are gone. But top rusher Marcus Thomas returns; the junior set a school record last season with four consecutive 100-yard rushing performances.

His receiving skills are also handy in Price's proven one-back offense. Thomas, a former *Parade* All-American, made 32 receptions for 440 yards last season.

Last year's leading pass catcher, speedster Johnnie Lee Higgins Jr. — he has a reported time of 4.18 seconds for 40 yards — heads up the returning cast. He has big-play ability, as evidenced by his 17.1-yard average and nine touchdowns on 49 receptions.

Joining him at wideout are Daniel Robinson, a redshirt who played 12 games in 2004, and Joe West, who had 19 catches in 2005.

Jake Sears, who started seven games a year ago, returns at tight end and will be backed up by Jamar Hunt.

On the offensive line, standouts Jose Garcia and Josh House must be replaced. Hard-working veteran Andy Smith steps in for Garcia at left guard, while Oniel Cousins, a speedy lineman with vast potential, takes over for House at left tackle.



Scouting Report: Offense

2005 stats: 122.2 ypg rushing (10th C-USA/87th NCAA), 300.6 passing (1st/9th), 422.8 total offense (3rd/31st), 31.8 ppg (2nd/33rd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Jordan Palmer*	Sr.	Should continue rewriting UTEP record book as senior.	Brandis Dew, Fr.
RB	Marcus Thomas*	Jr.	Had school record four straight 100-yard games in '05.	Johan Givens, Jr.
WR	Joe West*	Jr.	Hauled in 15 of 19 catches in last seven games last year.	Chris Marrow, Sr.
WR	Daniel Robinson	Sr.	Redshirted last season; saw action in 12 games in 2004.	Chris Day, So.
WR	Johnnie Lee Higgins Jr.*	Sr.	UTEP's leading receiver is one of nation's fastest.	David Sutton, Sr.
TE	Jake Sears*	Jr.	Solid performer started seven games for Miners in '05.	Jamar Hunt, So.
LT	Oniel Cousins	Jr.	300-pounder has great quickness and lots of potential.	Tim Ford, Jr.
LG	Andy Smith	Sr.	Hard work in offseason has landed him starting job.	Cameron Raschke, Fr.
C	Robby Felix*	So.	Honorable mention Freshman All-American.	Jake Belshe, Sr.
RG	James Riley*	Jr.	Coming off knee injury; should be 100 percent by fall.	Colby Meek, Fr.
RT	Tyler Ribitzki*	So.	Started final six games of 2005 as redshirt freshman.	Humberto Padilla, Sr.

*Returning starter

Scouting Report: Defense

2005 stats: 160.7 ypg rushing (5th in C-USA/72nd NCAA), 212.8 passing (5th/51st), 373.4 total defense (5th/58th), 25.9 ppg (7th/61st)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Alex Obomese*	Sr.	In 2005, was a second-team All-C-USA performer.	Reggie Miles, Sr.
LT	Justin Hanel*	Sr.	Consistent performer started seven games last year.	James Olalekan, So.
RT	Zach West*	Sr.	After battling injuries in '05, ready to return to top form.	Ricky Van, Sr.
DE	Joe Ward	Sr.	Has seen action in 30 games during past three seasons.	Justin Watson, Sr.
LB	Troy Collavo*	Sr.	Had 112 tackles last season, second most on team.	Jason McQuay, Sr.
LB	Jeremy Jones*	Sr.	Leading tackler gained 15 pounds and could be better.	Brian Wilkins, Fr.
LB	Emeri Spence	Jr.	Played in all 12 games last year and had 16 tackles.	Josh Chamois, Sr.
CB	Nate Draughon*	Sr.	Broke up team-high 10 passes last season..	Bryant Tisdale, Sr.
CB	Josh Ferguson*	Jr.	Picked off two passes in 2005, one for a touchdown.	Tim McCullouch, Sr.
SS	Joe Fleskoski*	Sr.	Intercepted three passes and had 75 tackles last year.	Phillip Moss, Sr.
FS	Quintin Demps*	Jr.	Led all defensive backs in 2005 with 78 tackles.	Braxton Amy, Fr.

*Returning starter

Last year's line was a major reason why the Miner offense was so potent last season. Expect more of the same in 2006.

DEFENSE

UTEP returns nine starters from a group that ranked fifth in C-USA in total defense last season.

Two thirds of their linebacking corps is back. Seniors Troy Collavo and Jeremy Jones were the top two tacklers in 2005 and could earn all-conference honors this year. They each had 14.5 tackles for loss to tie for the team lead.

Emeri Spence will man the remaining linebacker spot after playing 12 games in 2005.

Needing a new starter at end, UTEP turns to Joe Ward, who has played in 30

games over the past three seasons. On the other side will be Alex Obomese, a second-team All-C-USA performer in 2005. Reggie Miles and Justin Watson will also play.

Justin Hanel, who started seven games in 2005, is back at left tackle. Right tackle Zach West appears healthy and is the starter at the other tackle spot.

All four starters return from last year's secondary.

Free safety Quintin Demps last season led all UTEP defensive backs with 78 tackles. Joe Fleskoski, who had three interceptions last year, tying him with Demps for the team lead, returns at strong safety.

As for cornerback, both Nate Draughon and Josh Ferguson, who had

two interceptions last season, are back. Also in the mix will be Lance Castleberry, Da-mon Cromartie, Tim McCullouch, Fred Patton and Bryant Tisdale.

SPECIAL TEAMS

UTEP's kicking game is in good hands with seniors Ryan Hotchkiss at punter and Reagan Schneider at kicker.

Schneider is one of the best in Conference USA, hitting 18 of 23 field goal attempts last season. He was seven of nine from 40-plus yards last season, with a long of 49.

Higgins will return both kickoffs and punts with Demps joining him on kick-off duty. Higgins averaged 22.4 yards on kick returns, and 9.4 on punt returns.

— Steve Hunt

1. SEC

Welcome back to the college football penthouse. A case can be made for one-third of the league starting in the preseason Top 10 (LSU, Auburn, Florida, Georgia). That would be a slight improvement over 2005 when four finished in the top 12.

And that was a so-called down year when Tennessee took the season off and only six teams went bowling.

How good is the SEC? In '05, for the second consecutive year, five teams won at least nine games. 'Bama is back. LSU survived two hurricanes, got to the conference title game and thrashed Miami in the Peach Bowl. Auburn has won 26 of its last 30. Georgia is the defending champion.

All of them might be might be chasing Florida in '06.

We knew this was more than just a basketball league.

2. ACC

Expansion has been good for the league, pushing the ACC higher and packing the conference with depth. Miami, Florida State, feel free to be what you once were.

Yeah, yeah, we know FSU won it last year, but at 8-5? The Noles (109th in rushing?) and 'Canes (replacing five coaches) have issues they didn't used to have.

For now, the ACC's flag-bearing program is Virginia Tech, which won (and then played for) the conference title in its first two seasons in the ACC, going 23-5 overall and 14-3 in the league.

Beamer's boys will still hover around the Top 10 this season, and, in any given year, challenges could come from Clemson ... or Virginia ... or North Carolina State ... or Maryland ... or Georgia Tech ... did we mention Miami and FSU?

3. Big Ten

Ohio State is this year's version of USC. Loaded offense, questionable defense. Jim Tressel has to find nine new starters on defense ... somehow he'll find a way. It is Ohio State.

Elsewhere, Lloyd Carr has to find his way back to the Top 10. Joe Paterno got back there last season, but can Penn State do it again? Iowa always seems ready to sneak in the back door.

The bottom of the league is getting saltier, with 2004 coaching changes potentially taking hold at Indiana and Illinois.

4. Pac-10

Even with Troy declining ever so slightly, the Left Coast goes five deep (USC, Cal, Arizona State, Oregon, UCLA) and the bottom of the Pac is generally better than those in other big conferences. The Trojans' greatness, however, gives the league its identity.

5. Big 12

Texas and Oklahoma both have national championship talent, but it drops off severely after that. Nebraska should win a diminished Big 12 North, which has seen recent coaching turnover at half the programs (Nebraska, Kansas State, Colorado).

6. Big East

The good news: The Big East has established itself enough that it can expect to keep its automatic BCS berth in the future. It's earned that much. The better news: That's because West Virginia and Louisville might play a national championship elimination game on Nov. 2.

7. Mountain West

The MWC has its own network (CSTV) and a best-of-the rest rep. TCU would have played in a BCS game last year had the current rules been in effect. Utah and the Horned Frogs have eyes for the BCS this season.

8. Conference USA

Not as bad as you think after the loss of Louisville to the Big East. Half the league went bowling last year. Central Florida accomplished the biggest turnaround in the country. Tulsa won the league title (on the road) and had more victories than big brother Oklahoma. Mike Price has guided UTEP to back-to-back bowls for the first time in 50 years.

9. WAC

No lack of coaching acumen, with Idaho's Dennis Erickson joining Dick Tomey, June Jones, Pat Hill, Chris Ault and others. Bad news is that Boise State lost Dan Hawkins, and the league is horribly weak at the bottom.

10. MAC

Whatever happened to Big Ten Jr.? Only one team (Toledo) won more than eight games. Nine of the 12 teams had at least five losses. Still, the league has produced an impressive run of quarterbacks.

11. Sun Belt

In business to stay in business. Sun Belt teams play money games at Texas, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, LSU, Auburn, Clemson, Kansas State, Oklahoma State, South Carolina, Maryland, Miami, Alabama, Nebraska, Georgia Tech and Florida State. No wonder the champion finishes around 6-5 each year.

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